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WINTER EVENINGS.

VOL. III.

13

Winter Evenings:

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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Winter

Winter Evenings:

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE and LETTERS.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAP. I.

Of the mere Preferment Hunter *in the Church.*

Cœleſtium inanes! PERSIUS.

IN many profeſſions and employments the only object in view is the accumulation of money and advancement in the ranks of life. But religion teaches men to look above the profits and honours which the world is able to beſtow; and when an official profeſſor of it appears to be remarkably anxious for preferment, it is difficult to believe that he is perfectly ſincere. To the vulgar, at leaſt, he ſeems to be one of thoſe who follow Jeſus Chriſt, not ſo much for the wonderful works which he did, as for the loaves and the fiſh.

There is ſo much of hypocriſy, deceit, and avarice, in the *mere preferment-hunter*, that I ſhall not heſitate to ſtigmatize his character with the moſt opprobrious epithets. To the vices of a ſharper and an uſurer he adds thoſe of the pretended devotee, who wears the robes of religion to conceal the deformity of avarice. Tradeſmen who endeavour to obtain goods under falſe pretences are diſgraced with the name of ſwindlers; and why ſhould not a term of infamy be appropriated to the preferment-hunters, who, profeſſing themſelves clergymen, that is, teachers of a ſublime and religious philoſophy, appear to ſeek nothing for themſelves but the goods of this world, which they perſuade others to deſpiſe? Why ſhould it be thought unjuſt or illiberal to denominate them, as a mark of diſtinction from better men, eccleſiaſtical ſwindlers?

A clergyman of learning and abilities who acts conſiſtently with his profeſſion, and many ſuch there doubtleſs are, ſupports the moſt reſpectable character in ſociety. But that the corruption of the beſt thing is the worſt, is true alſo in this department. A ſenſible layman, however religiouſly diſpoſed, and however candid and charitable, cannot view the miniſters of Chriſt, as they call themſelves, more eager in purſuit of a prebendal ſtall than in the ſalvation of ſouls, without diſ-

guſt

guſt and indignation. When he ſees them pay the moſt abject court to ſtateſmen and rich patrons who are able to recommend them at court and procure eccleſiaſtical dignity, without any regard to moral character, he naturally concludes that they are worſhippers of Mammon, and that their ſermons are but the cold productions of official neceſſity.

True religion inſpires a greatneſs of mind as diſtant from abject meanneſs as from empty pride; but how cringing is the demeanour of the preferment-hunter, how ſervile his converſation! He aſſents and diſſents at the nod of his graceleſs patron. Many a footman is a man of ſpirit in compariſon. And are ſuch as theſe the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, commiſſioned to rebuke vice boldly; and to teach others not to be conformed to this world? Themſelves the ſlaves of vanity and faſhion; looking upwards, not to heaven, but to preferment, and downwards with contempt on the inferior clergy, and all the poor? Are theſe the men that are to bear the croſs, and teach us to follow their example? They know this world well indeed, and love it heartily; and if you wiſh to play your cards well, either in the literal or figurative ſenſe of that phraſe, you cannot find better inſtructors; but for religion, many a plowman is a ſaint in

compariſon. Diveſt them of their feather-topt wigs, their gowns and caſſocks, and they are only qualified to make a figure at a watering place, a dancing and card aſſembly, or in Exchange Alley.

Nothing ſeems to ſatisfy their rapacity. From vicarages and rectories they riſe in their aſpirations to prebends, canonries, archdeaconries, deaneries, biſhoprics, and archbiſhoprics, and thence to heaven as late as may be. Such is the edification after which they pant, like as the hart panteth for the water brooks; as to preaching the goſpel to the poor, viſiting the ſick, cloathing the naked, feeding the hungry, they have neither time nor inclination for ſuch mean employment. Think ye that they entered the church to ſerve others? They have no ſuch enthuſiaſtic ideas. Themſelves only they wiſh to ſerve, and in this world are contented to fix their reſidence, provided they can but lodge themſelves in a palace.

Did they ever rebuke the vice of their patron either in the pulpit or in converſation? Have theſe men, who think themſelves entitled to the very firſt places of eccleſiaſtical dignity, devoted their youth to ſtudy, and their manhood to uſeful labours in their ſacred profeſſion? Have they been indefatigable preachers or

irrefragable

irrefragable controverſialiſts? By no means. They have ſtudied the graces and the arts of pleaſing, and the Letters of Lord Cheſterfield have been unto them as a goſpel. Contrary to the ſcriptural precept, they have mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage. They have been neither men of learning themſelves, nor inclined to encourage it in others. When they have been at laſt elevated to the wiſhed for pinnacle, they have ſtill ſeemed to look down with contempt on the poor and the miſerable, for whoſe ſake Chriſt was born and died. To form connexions with titled perſonages, or men in power, is their firſt labour and their laſt.

Dr. Dean was born in the middle rank. He had a good perſon, and was not deficient in common ſenſe, though he had no pretenſions to taſte in poetry or the fine arts, and very little learning. He excelled his ſchoolfellows when a boy rather in the accompliſhments of muſic and dancing than in grammatical knowledge, or ſkill in compoſition. He went to college with a character of decency, which he has retained through life, though he never roſe above mediocrity in his attainments.

A certain lord wiſhed for a travelling companion for his ſon, and young Dean was recom-

mended as a well-behaved perſon, from whom the pupil would learn ſomething of addreſs and manners, which, it was agreed on all ſides, were far more uſeful in the world than Greek and Latin.

The pupil was of a very vicious and extravagant turn; and Mr. Dean found that he ſhould be entirely out of favour if he attempted to reſtrain him within the bounds of virtue. He therefore gave him one general caution, which was, to have regard to decorum in his vicious indulgences, and to conceal that conduct upon which, if he ſaw it openly, he ſhould be obliged to animadvert *ex officio*. The young man underſtood the nature of the reſtraint, and had cunning enough to regulate his conduct by it.

After running over the Continent in the uſual manner, the young nobleman returned improved in the graces, and therefore to the entire ſatisfaction of his father. Several noblemen, who were intimately acquainted in the family, were ſtruck with the eaſy freedom and diſengaged air which marked the travelled pupil, and did not heſitate to attribute much of the merit to Dean. Some compenſation muſt be made the tutor; but my Lord was too mean to expend any thing out of his own purſe, and therefore uſed his intereſt

to

to procure a Chancellor's living of three hundred a year, in which he ſucceeded.

Mr. Dean never ſaw his pariſh-church ſince he was inducted into it; but the revenue of it enabled him to make a reſpectable appearance in his patron's family; and he contracted many intimacies with perſons in high life. His time was entirely ſpent in cultivating friendſhip with thoſe who had intereſt.

In the liſt of his noble acquaintance there was a Lord of great weight in politics; but of infamous character, and a profeſſed unbeliever in Chriſtianity. To this nobleman he attached himſelf by the moſt aſſiduous attentions, and particularly by ſinging a certain ſong with remarkable humour and expreſſion. Jollity was excellence in his Lordſhip's opinion, and therefore Dr. Dean, for he had now taken his degree, was jolly in the extreme. If there was a drinking party, Dr. Dean would be as drunk as a lord; and if his Lordſhip choſe to invite his favourite concubine to dinner, Dr. Dean was never unwilling to ſanction the viſit by his holy preſence. He would indeed write a little Sapphic ode for his Lordſhip on ſuch occaſions, for which his Lordſhip had all the credit with the lady.

Qualities ſo agreeable and uſeful could not fail to endear him to his patron, who, not being deficient in gratitude, reſolved to *reward* him, eſpecially as he could do it without *incurring any expence.* A dignity in the church, of very conſiderable value, became vacant, and Dr. Dean was preſented to it at the requeſt of his Lordſhip. Thus great men pay their clerical toad-eaters!

The Doctor now became a man of conſequence in his own eyes, and in the eyes of thoſe who are inclined to venerate external appearances. As he had aſcended the ladder ſo highly and ſo eaſily, and began to form hopes of reaching the top of it, he purſued the ſame plan of flattery and accommodation with which he had ſet out in life, and which he had found ſucceſsful. He had almoſt made a ſure friend of one of thoſe great men who make biſhops, by a preſent of a brace of pointers, when death, whom no arts can render exorable, diſappointed his ambition. He had been at an election-dinner, where he caught a violent fever by eating and drinking for the honour of one of my Lord's particular friends; and, before he was quite recovered, was invited to a ball, where he danced ſo as to overfatigue himſelf, which brought on a relapſe, and occaſioned his diſſolution.

In this inſtance we behold a man of very little learning, and no piety, exalted to a ſtation in which none ſhould be placed who are not remarkably diſtinguiſhed for both. How does the inſtance operate on the clergy and the laity? The clergy it teaches to believe that their advancement in the church will not be promoted by virtue or learning; and the conſequences of ſuch an opinion among the majority are eaſily imagined. The laity it leads to entertain diſhonourable ideas of the church, ſome of whoſe main pillars are ſo rotten and ugly, and perhaps of the religion which the church is eſtabliſhed to promote. Whenever the clergy become contemptible, religion ſhares the diſgrace.

The mere preferment-hunter is certainly a very fair object of ſatire, for his conduct is baſe in itſelf, and very injurious to ſociety. He brings every thing that is ſacred, and every thing that is juſt and good, into diſrepute, as far as the influence of his example is diffuſed. While ſuch perſons ſucceed, by ſiniſter arts, what chance have men of real merit, whoſe ſpirit can never ſubmit to mean behaviour, if they were ſure of a mitre? The preferment-hunter has been ſtudying the graces and attending levees, while the modeſt man of merit was ſtudying wiſdom, and acquiring an ability to teach it others, in

the receſs of his library. While the preferment-hunter was conning the Court Calendar, the modeſt man of merit was reading the Bible.

God forbid that any of theſe remarks ſhould be miſconſtrued into a reflection on the good man, who, in conſequence of his merit, is advanced by the over-ruling direction of Divine Providence to high ſtations in the church. Many ſuch there have been in this country, and many ſuch there are at this time. Their penetrating and generous minds muſt have ſeen and loathed the character which I have juſt deſcribed, *that of a profeſſed ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, an ordained miniſter of the Goſpel*, making uſe of their profeſſion merely to graſp riches and honours, and to gratify a peculiar avarice and ambition.

I take leave of the ſubject with a wiſh, that patrons of church preferment would conſider their right of patronage as a ſacred charge.

I beg leave alſo to add, that there are no perſonal alluſions in this chapter. Nor let any one accuſe me of cenſorioufneſs or illiberal reflection on a profeſſion which I ought to honour. It is becauſe I honour it, that I would explode thoſe characters which, while they diſgrace it, contrive to receive the ſecular rewards of it.

CHAP. II.

Of the Expediency of introducing Chriſtianity into the newly-diſcovered Iſlands of the South-Sea.

IT is impoſſible to read the voyages to the South Seas without great delight; but the delight is interrupted too frequently by ſentiments of horror and of painful ſympathy. Our newly diſcovered fellow-creatures appear in many moſt amiable points of view. They are generous, ſenſible, and friendly. Their hearts ſeem to be peculiarly ſuſceptible of pleaſure and of pain; but they are guided too implicitly by their lively ſenſations, and their reaſon appears to be univerſally overpowered by the violence of their paſſions. Though by no means cruel and ferocious in their natural temper, they exhibit, under the operation of revenge and ſuperſtition, the moſt horrid inſtances of ſavage barbarity.

Much has been written on the ſubject of Anthropophagi or Cannibals; and many entertained a ſuſpicion that they did not at preſent exiſt, if it were true that they ever exiſted. But the late voyages have rendered that truth, diſgraceful as it is to human nature, indubitable. It is a cir-

cumſtance which aggravates, inſtead of extenuating the malignity of the practice, that it ariſes not from hunger and neceſſity, but from a diabolical ſentiment of revenge. That paſſion, uncontrouled by religion and philoſophy, is not to be gratified completely but by the deſtruction of the unhappy object of it, and even by tearing it in pieces, and devouring it with a canine ferocity. Is it not eaſy to perceive, in practices ſo malignant, the interference of an evil ſpirit?

The accounts of our late circumnavigators are unqueſtionably true, and they evince the neceſſity of endeavouring by the very firſt opportunity to call the ſtrangers from the error of their ways, and to initiate them in the benevolent doctrines of Chriſtianity.

Superſtition alſo exhibits a ſcene in the South Seas not leſs ſhocking than revenge. To ſacrifice a fellow-creature in order to pleaſe a benignant Deity is a deſign which the Evil Spirit only could infuſe into the heart of man. The practice is by no means peculiar to the Iſlanders of the Southern main; it prevailed among the ancient Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Canaanites; and even Abraham, miſtaking the real will of God, would have ſacrificed his ſon Iſaac if the hand of heaven had not, for the correction of this

this fatal miſtake, interpoſed, and ſupplied one of the beſtial train as a more acceptable offering. Philo indeed detracts from the merit of Abraham's faith and intention, by aſſerting, that many kings and nations accuſtomed themſelves to ſacrifice their firſt-born ſons, for the ſake of propitiating an angry Deity. There is a paſſage in the cloſe of the third chapter of the ſecond book of Kings which fully confirms the idea that Abraham's was not a ſingle inſtance—"And when "the King of Moab ſaw that the battel was too "ſore for him, he took with him ſeven hundred "men that drew ſwords, to break through even "unto the King of Edom; but they could not. "Then he took his eldeſt ſon, that ſhould have "reigned in his ſtead, and offered him for "a burnt-offering upon the wall." It is ſhocking beyond expreſſion that a father ſhould immolate a ſon; but what deed is ſo nefarious of which the natural man, unaſſiſted by the grace of God, is not capable? Ariſtotle ſays, that it was uſual among the Trebatti for a ſon to ſacrifice a father *. I make no comment on deeds which carry with them their own immediate condemnation.

But I cannot but be ſtruck with the wonderful ſimilarity obſervable in the manners and ſu-

* In Topicis, lib. ii. cap. ult.

perſtitions

perſtitions of ſavage men throughout the world, and in all ages. The idea of propitiating the Deity by bloodſhed, or the ſacrifice of ſome living creatures, either human or beſtial, is almoſt univerſal. The ſacrifice of animals began with Abel, and it is probable that the tradition of its being acceptable to God was handed down from him to the days of Noah. Noah himſelf exhibited an example of it to all poſterity, for on his departure from the ark, we read, that he "build-" ed an altar unto the Lord, and took of every " clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl, and of-" fered burnt-offerings on the altar; and the " Lord ſmelled a ſweet ſavour; and the Lord " ſaid in his heart, I will not again curſe the " ground any more for man's ſake."

It ſeems probable that as men were diſperſed through various parts of the world from the ark of Noah, they carried with them the example of ſacrificing animals, and diffuſed the idea that God was pleaſed with them, as indications of the ſacrificer's faith and ſincerity.

There is, I think, no doubt but that they were types or faint adumbrations of the great ſacrifice that was to be made by the Lamb of God for the ſins of the whole world. It is to be attributed to a well-meaning, but ſuperſtitious exceſs, that

in

in the place of irrational animals, the nations at length ſacrificed human creatures. This is to account for it on the moſt candid conjecture; but I believe it will be conſiſtent with reaſon and Scripture to ſuppoſe, that it was the Evil Being who tempted man to break one of the firſt laws of God, which ſays, Thou ſhalt do no murder.

It is certain that God cannot behold ſuch deeds with any other ſentiments but thoſe of extreme diſpleaſure. "Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by "man ſhall his blood be ſhed," was the edict of Him who made man, and who alone poſſeſſes a right to diſpoſe of him. "Will I eat the fleſh "of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" ſaith the Lord. Much leſs can he delight in the blood of his favourite creature.

Can any man then of common humanity in the civilized countries of Europe avoid moſt earneſtly wiſhing that theſe poor children of nature might learn what that means, "I will have *mercy* and 'not *ſacrifice*?"

The expoſing or murdering of infants is another ſavage practice which diſgraces all thoſe virtues and amiable diſpoſitions which are repreſented as exiſting in a remarkable degree among the Iſlanders.

Iſlanders. This practice, like the others which I have mentioned, prevailed alſo among the ancients before the Chriſtian æra. Moſes was expoſed, as were Romulus and Remus among the Romans, and Œdipus among the Greeks. The Greeks and Romans uſed ſometimes to place with the expoſed infant ſome valuable things which might ſerve to induce the traveller who ſhould find it to take care of it, if it were alive, and to bury it, if dead. I do not indeed recollect any country in which, like theſe, there ſeemed to be a combination of the rich and powerful to deſtroy the offspring. Poverty, indeed, and ſhame, frequently cauſes ſuch acts of extreme barbarity among individuals in civilized nations; but it was never tolerated or countenanced, but, on the contrary, ſeverely puniſhed wherever Chriſtianity has been introduced. The Foundling Hoſpital in England, while it does honour to human nature as a charitable inſtitution, reflects ſome diſgrace upon it, ſince it proves that parents abound in England who are ready to relinquiſh their offspring forever. Indeed the prevailing practice of putting children out to nurſe, even when the mother is healthy and able to afford it the nouriſhment which nature gave, is not very honourable to the ſentimental affections of thoſe who at the ſame time pretend to an uncommon ſhare of ſympathetic refinement.

This

This neglect however, though culpable, is not in the ſmalleſt degree comparable to the cruelty of the Iſlanders with whom our navigators have lately made the world acquainted. Chriſtianity would not permit ſuch abominable practices, and therefore it is incumbent upon thoſe rulers who have cauſed the diſcovery of theſe people, to take care that they ſhall be inſtructed, as ſoon as they can be made capable of receiving inſtruction, in the truths of the religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Was Omiah baptized? or was he in any reſpect prepared to improve the ſpiritual ſtate of his countrymen? If not, I cannot help lamenting that the zeal for the propagation of Chriſtianity, that is (as Chriſtians muſt deem it), a zeal for the diffuſion of happineſs, is greatly relaxed among us.

I ſay nothing of the theft and luſt, and other evil practices and habits which prevail remarkably among theſe Iſlanders, ſince they are trifling faults, however heinous in themſelves, when contraſted with the atrocious crimes of which I have already ſpoken. When greater evils are corrected, the more inconſiderable will ſoon be removed.

I cannot help expreſſing the pleaſure I felt in reading the laſt voyages, at that paſſage, which relates

Iſlanders. This practice, like the others which I have mentioned, prevailed alſo among the ancients before the Chriſtian æra. Moſes was expoſed, as were Romulus and Remus among the Romans, and Œdipus among the Greeks. The Greeks and Romans uſed ſometimes to place with the expoſed infant ſome valuable things which might ſerve to induce the traveller who ſhould find it to take care of it, if it were alive, and to bury it, if dead. I do not indeed recollect any country in which, like theſe, there ſeemed to be a combination of the rich and powerful to deſtroy the offspring. Poverty, indeed, and ſhame, frequently cauſes ſuch acts of extreme barbarity among individuals in civilized nations; but it was never tolerated or countenanced, but, on the contrary, ſeverely puniſhed wherever Chriſtianity has been introduced. The Foundling Hoſpital in England, while it does honour to human nature as a charitable inſtitution, reflects ſome diſgrace upon it, ſince it proves that parents abound in England who are ready to relinquiſh their offspring forever. Indeed the prevailing practice of putting children out to nurſe, even when the mother is healthy and able to afford it the nouriſhment which nature gave, is not very honourable to the ſentimental affections of thoſe who at the ſame time pretend to an uncommon ſhare of ſympathetic refinement.

This

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relates that the Spaniards had ſet up a croſs, with the inſcription,

CHRISTUS VINCIT.

It is an honour to that nation to have firſt introduced the name of Chriſt into theſe iſlands. There is in this enlightened age and in the benevolent temper of the preſent times no danger leſt they ſhould be guilty of cruelty in carrying on the conqueſts of Jeſus Chriſt. The olive branch, and not the ſword, is now borne under his banners.

I wiſh our own nation had paid ſome regard to this noble object as well as to the obſervation of the tranſit of Venus, to botany, to longitude and latitude, and to other matters which belong to us only as inhabitants of this little planet. What a glorious voyage will that be, and Heaven grant it may not be diſtant, when pious men ſhall carry the croſs on the prows of their veſſels, and triumphantly enter the havens of the Pacific iſles announcing the good tidings of peace, joy, and immortality.

CHAP. III.

Of the Prevalence of Methodiſm.

THERE is ſomething ſo flattering to the pride of man in the ſelection of his own ſyſtem of opinions in religion and philoſophy, that it might be foreſeen in theory, as it is proved in fact, into how numerous ſects, parties, or perſuaſions, every ſociety would be divided. In England the national church is undoubtedly well conſtituted for every purpoſe of Chriſtian piety; but to many it is a ſufficient objection againſt it, that all its rules and ordinances are already preſcribed ſo as to leave no room for the gratification of vanity by innovation. *Leaders* of ſects are often, though not always, under the influence of vanity; but I would by no means affirm that their followers are not conducted by the unaffected impulſe of a ſincere intention.

The zeal with which the methodiſtical teachers diffuſe their doctrines is exemplary. It exhibits every appearance of ſincerity. Early and late, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, they are ready to exert their beſt abilities in prayer and in all acts of charity. They wait not for ſolicitation, but ſeek occaſions of doing the work of that miniſtry which

which they have voluntarily undertaken. They conſider the acquiſition of a proſelyte, or the converſion of a ſinner, as gain; and are no leſs delighted with it, than the merchant with his fair profit, and the uſurer with his exorbitant intereſt. Under the natural influence of an ardour and induſtry ſo ſingularly active, it cannot be wondered that their ſect ſhould flouriſh.

There are at this time but few populous towns and villages in the kingdom in which the Methodiſts have not a reſpectable place of worſhip, and a permanent congregation. And there is every reaſon to believe that they will continue to encreaſe, unleſs their endeavours ſhould be counteracted by the extraordinary zeal and indefatigable activity of the regular clergy.

As the regular clergy commonly poſſeſs the great advantage of a ſuperior education, and often the accompliſhments and addreſs which introduce them into the company of perſons eminent for their rank and fortunes, they might eaſily ſubdue their antagoniſts if their zeal equalled their ability. But there is in many an indolence, undeſervedly honoured with the titles of prudence, modeſty, or humility; an indolence, which induces them to be ſatisfied with ſuch a performance of their duty as, though it may appear to be

regular

regular and decent, is ſuſpected of being formal and perfunctory.

The Methodiſts, with great propriety, and indeed in imitation of that great teacher whom both they and we profeſs to follow, addreſs themſelves with at leaſt as much zeal to the poor as to the rich and great. The officiating clergy do indeed viſit the poor when ſent for, and promote almſgiving on the uſual occaſions; but the higher orders ſpend their time for the moſt part among the rich, and in the uſual amuſements of a pleaſureable or faſhionable life. But where do you find the Methodiſt from choice early in the morning and at the midnight hour? In the cottage or in the garret of the poor on his knees, and at the bed-ſide of the ſick and the afflicted. It will be ſaid that, under the influence of enthuſiaſm, he runs into an extreme; and I ſhall not be able to deny the charge; but I fear that the regular clergy often run into another extreme, that of indifference and inattention. It is the ſaying of a fine writer, *Fas eſt et ab hoſte doceri.* Let the regular clergyman condeſcend to learn of the poor Methodiſts ſo much zeal and ardour as may give him ſufficient earneſtneſs without enthuſiaſm. Let him have the warmth of enthuſiaſm without its madneſs and folly. Animated with true zeal, and enlightened with

real knowledge, and ſoftened with Chriſtian benevolence, he will be able to preſerve his congregation to himſelf, who will no longer be tempted to forſake the pariſh-church for the meeting place of every illiterate and itinerant preacher, who has nothing to cauſe him to be preferred but his earneſtneſs of manner, and his appearance of unaffected ardour.

I am not the apologiſt of the Methodiſts. Their zeal and activity I admire. Their extravagance I pity and diſapprove. I ſee them diffuſed over the country, and drawing away the congregations of the regular churches. I am convinced that the churches would anſwer their pious purpoſes ſufficiently well without ſchiſm, if the clergy would condeſcend to uſe the honeſt means which are uſed by the Methodiſts. I therefore take the liberty of recommending thoſe means to imitation; their zeal and activity in performing the ſocial offices of religion, and their earneſtneſs and force in the harangues of the pulpit. I have ventured to ſpeak in their favour where I thought them entitled to praiſe; I ſay ventured to ſpeak, for I know how dangerous it is to take the part of thoſe who are indiſcriminately deſpiſed both by the great and the learned; but was not this the caſe of the great Author of our religion?

I mean

I mean to conſult the intereſt of the Church of England when I recommend additional ardour in its clergy, as proper to counteract the influence of the methodiſtical preachers. *Controverſial writing*, of which we have enough, will produce but little effect. The tribes who throng to the Tabernacle are not readers. They are to be influenced by *oral* influence alone; and if they find the preacher in the church unable to prevent their ſlumbers, they will haſten to the Tabernacle, where, if they can find nothing elſe, they are ſure of zeal and a noiſy eloquence, which rouſes their attention.

No churchman will deny that the prevalence of methodiſm is an evil. He will, in conſequence of his conviction that it is an evil, feel a deſire to remove it. He will conſider the moſt effectual means. If perſecution were allowable in the ſight of reaſon and humanity, he muſt know that it only contributes to augment what it pretends to diminiſh. But he muſt alſo know that in this liberal age, and this happy country, the love of liberty is too ardent to admit of perſecution. It only remains then that the regular clergy encounter Methodiſts with their own arms, with ſingular diligence, exemplary charity, and with unaffected earneſtneſs in prayer and in preaching; a noble emula-

tion,

tion, which muſt ultimately redound to the honour and happineſs of human nature.

There are ſome, for the clergy are but men, who, while the tythes and dues are regularly paid, ſeem to care but little whether the pews of their churches are empty or crowded. They can ſee their pariſhioners turn away from the ancient well-worn path which led their anceſtors to the venerable church, and go in crowds to the newly erected tabernacle of a preaching mechanic: they can ſee themſelves thus deſerted with perfect indifference ſo long as their income, which they can demand by law, remains undiminiſhed. But theſe are few, as I hope and believe, in compariſon of thoſe who, retaining a regard for the eſtabliſhed church, cannot but lament when they obſerve the pariſh-church deſerted, and the barn ready to burſt with it's multitudes. They will acknowledge that it is laudable to attempt to excite ſuch a ſpirit of exertion in the clergy of the church as may call back the flock that has ſtrayed from its own fold by the invitation of ſpiritual food at once pleaſant and ſalutary. They will view this humble attempt in its true light, and candidly pardon a freedom of expreſſion which, like ſome remedies in deſperate caſes, is neceſſary to promote a certain recovery.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Habit of conſulting no one's Inclination but one's own.

IN this enlightened age ſelfiſhneſs has learned that the moſt effectual method of anſwering its purpoſes is to pretend to a great regard for others, and to ſtudy the art of pleaſing them. Many of the moſt ill-natured and contracted minds have acquired an artificial ſoftneſs and liberality, which they diſplay on all ſuch occaſions as are likely to promote their intereſt or elevation. Shallow and ſuperficial obſervers confide in the external appearance, and often believe them to poſſeſs that generoſity of which they are oſtentatious. But there are no men more ſelfiſh than the cultivators of the art of pleaſing. They have no other view in any thing they ſay or do but to ſerve themſelves, and to gratify either their appetites or their vanity.

But ſelfiſhneſs often aſſumes a more forbidding aſpect. Inſtead of ſeeking its ends by pleaſing others, it regards nothing but its own gratification, and is entirely careleſs whether they who are within the ſphere of its influence are pleaſed or diſguſted. There is ſomething in this kind

of ſelfiſhneſs more ſincere and reſpectable than in the other: it uſes no arts of deceit. It ſcorns advantages which are not to be obtained but by ſervility. But it is moroſe and diſagreeable. It violates the law of mutual civility, of humanity, of Chriſtianity. The ſurly lover of himſelf means to ſecure a greater ſhare of ſelf-enjoyment than others; but in this he is diſappointed, for ſuch is the oppoſition which he will always receive from thoſe around him, that he will ſeldom enjoy eaſe, much leſs any permanent ſatisfaction. His own temper and irritability, ſuppoſing every one who converſes with him to be ready to ſubmit to his will, will operate like a fever in diſturbing his repoſe.

The moroſe behaviour of the ſelf-pleaſer muſt certainly be attributed to a bad temper long indulged. There is a picture of him exhibited in the Characters of Theophraſtus, which is curious for its antiquity. I will endeavour to diſplay a copy of it to my readers.

"Self-pleaſing," ſays Theophraſtus, according to his uſual method of defining the abſtract and then deſcribing the concrete, "is an inabi-
"lity to bridle the temper in common converſa-
"tion.

"The

"The ſelf-pleaſer is ſuch an one as being "aſked where any one is, replies, "Do not "plague me." When he is civilly addreſſed "in the common form of ſalutation he will re- "turn no anſwer. If he happens to have any "thing to ſell, he will not tell the enquirer the "price, but will anſwer his queſtion by aſking, "How do you find it elſewhere?" If any one "from reſpect, and meaning to do him honour, "ſends him a preſent juſt before ſome feſtival "which he is to celebrate from cuſtom, he ſays, "This is no *gift*," intimating that it is only meant "to ſecure a return, and probably an invitation "to the feaſt. If any one accidentally bruſhes "againſt him in paſſing the ſtreets, or ſhoves "him forward, or treads upon his toes, and at "the ſame time begs his pardon, he will not "grant the pardon, but will pick a quarrel with "the incautious offender. When a friend in "diſtreſs is making a collection, and he is ap- "plied to for his contribution, he at firſt pe- "remptorily refuſes to give any thing, but af- "terwards brings his money, and ſays, "There's "ſo much more money thrown away." If he "happens to ſtrike his foot againſt a ſtone as he "is going along, he will begin curſing and "ſwearing at the ſtone. He cannot long bear "with, or wait for any man living. In the "cheerfulleſt meeting of friends he refuſes to

"ſing, to recite verſes, and to dance. And he "carries his moroſeneſs ſo far as that, when he "is out of humour, he will be angry with the "gods, and refuſe to ſay his prayers."

This character, as delineated by Theophraſtus, appears to be compounded of peeviſhneſs, avarice, and ill-nature. It is odious in the extreme. I ſhould imagine that very few arguments would be ſufficient to diſſuade from it. But the misfortune is, that they to whom this character belongs err not from a want of knowing its unamiableneſs, but from natural ill-temper, and from habits long confirmed.

When ſuch is the caſe, the evil is almoſt without a remedy. Some diſorders of the mind, as well as of the body, muſt be relinquiſhed as incurable. Yet this muſt not be done till every expedient of relief has been tried, and tried in vain. Endeavours, even at a late age, to correct the temper, will at leaſt prevent it from becoming worſe. There are many inſtances recorded in hiſtory of thoſe who have ſeen the faults of their temper in old age, and have had wiſdom and reſolution ſufficient to amend them. There is every reaſon to encourage the attempt: for *nunquam ſera eſt ad bonos mores via.*

The

The comfort which every man muſt feel in his own boſom, on the melioration of his temper, will lead him to proceed in his efforts once happily begun. If he can but acquire a ſufficient command over himſelf ſo as to refrain his tongue from aſperity, and from haſty expreſſions, he will find the conqueſt of his angry paſſions greatly facilitated. When the temper is corrected, the manners to which it gave riſe will naturally be ſoftened. Conceſſions will be made according to the dictates of politeneſs, and they will be repaid with ample returns of civility. The comfort of the family, or ſocial circle, will be ſo much augmented, that he who formerly ſought to pleaſe himſelf, by arrogating every thing with moroſeneſs, will find his end moſt effectually accompliſhed by conceding to others, in return, that reſpect and accommodation which is paid as a debt with cheerfulneſs, but as a tribute with reluctance.

Since the correction of a moroſe and ſelfiſh humour is attended with ſo much difficulty in age, it will become the anxious parent to exert himſelf in the prevention of it in early youth. But let him not ſuppoſe that extreme ſeverity is the beſt method of correcting ſelfiſhneſs and ill-nature. Extreme indulgence is indeed highly

pernicious to the temper; but harſhneſs, on the other hand, provokes and roughens what it means to mitigate. The angry paſſions of a parent furniſh alſo an example which a boy will certainly imitate and juſtify by paternal authority.

CHAP. V.

Of the prevailing Practice of acting Plays by private Gentlemen and Ladies, writing and ſpeaking Prologues and Epilogues, and building private Theatres.

Natio comœda eſt. Juv.
Stultitiam patiuntur opes.—— Hor.

OF all the various imitations of life and manners which the arts exhibit, none approach ſo nearly in reſemblance to nature as the poetry of the drama, embelliſhed by the actor's utterance, and by all the ornaments of the ſtage. Beautiful indeed are the images excited by the pencil; for colour and truth of figure, and of attitude, almoſt vivify the canvaſs. But what Parrhaſius or Apelles can paint motion? Here their admirable art is found to fail; but dramatic poetry, accompanied with action, moſt amply ſupplies the defect, and gives to imitation the air of reality.

Arts ſo delightful, it might juſtly be expected, would be univerſally purſued. The fact correſponds with the theory. There is ſcarce an age recorded, or a nation deſcribed, in which traces of dramatic exhibition are undiſcernible; but in no country has the drama been more ardently cultivated

than in England, where poetry has had her Shakeſpeare, and the hiſtrionic art her Garrick.

So great have been the charms of the ſtage, that many in the genteeleſt walks of life, not ſatisfied with being ſpectators only, have burned with an ambition to wear the ſock and buſkin, and to court the plaudits of a private audience. The profeſſion of a player was once unreaſonably degraded. It was an illiberal idea which claſſed thoſe who are able to expreſs the fineſt ſenſibilities of human nature with the refuſe of ſociety. Garrick was once, I think, miſtaken for a ſhewman in the country, and treated, in conſequence of that idea, with no great reſpect. He contributed greatly to add that dignity to the profeſſion, which, when it is ſupported by an excellence ſimilar to his own, it undoubtedly deſerves. The faſhion of acting plays, which prevails in families exalted by rank and fortune, adds ſtill more reſpect to the art of acting, and renders a ſet of men, whom the law has conſidered as little ſuperior to vagabonds, objects of wonder and of imitation. The fineſt ladies are eager to emulate the graces and powers of an Abingdon or a Siddons; and lords and baronets have condeſcended to be the diſciples of each modern Roſcius.

Nothing

Nothing can enliven a rural reſidence more effectually than the prevailing practice of repreſenting plays in a neighbourly way by friends and relations. Muſic, poetry, painting, fine dreſſes, perſonal beauty, and poliſhed eloquence, combine to pleaſe all who are admitted to partake of the entertainment. No rudeneſs and vulgarity interrupts the actors. The ſpectators or audience bring with them a reſolution to be pleaſed; and if they ſhould at any time feel diſpleaſure, they have too much gratitude for the invitation, too much friendſhip for the proprietor of the theatre and the performance, and too much natural and acquired politeneſs, to expreſs their diſguſt. Thus all proceeds ſmoothly. Good humour reigns, and if vanity wiſhes to be gratified, why ſhould it be diſappointed, ſince the gratification is ſo harmleſs and inoffenſive?

But now enters ſome ſerious obſerver, and with a cynical air ventures to queſtion the innocence of theſe diverſions. "O!" exclaims the audience, "he is a methodiſt, a puritan, a ſaint. "Hiſs him out of the houſe, and let us ſhut the "door and enjoy ourſelves without intruſion." It muſt be acknowledged that his obſervations would be ill-timed and ill-placed in the theatre and amidſt the repreſentation; but let us hear whether he has any thing to ſay on the ſubject which

one may liſten to at ſome leiſure quarter of an hour while under the hair-dreſſer's hands, or while one is painting one's cheeks for an evening exhibition or performance.

Since there are public theatres magnificently ſupported for the public amuſement, it is certain that the pleaſure and improvement to be derived from the drama may be obtained without the trouble and expence of ſupporting and ſupplying a private theatre; a trouble, which often engroſſes ſo much time, as to infringe upon important duties; an expence, which leads to injuſtice, embarraſſment, and ruin. Thoſe who might otherwiſe have beſtowed their money and their time for the public benefit, or in works of charity, have found themſelves unable, and not inclined to do either, when their thoughts and incomes have been devoted to the expenſive vanities of acting, and maintaining with ſplendour the numerous requiſites of a private theatre.

It may perhaps admit a doubt, whether the various attitudes and ſituations into which impaſſioned lovers on the ſtage are unavoidably drawn, be favourable to thoſe virtues which tend to preſerve the tranquillity of domeſtic life. Beautiful dreſs, enraptured ſpeeches, tender embraces, inſpire ideas of love into the boſoms of

thoſe who cannot harbour them without criminality. It is a farther circumſtance unfavourable to morals, that moſt of the Engliſh comedies in the greateſt repute are ſo ſhamefully immoral, as to recommend vice with all the embelliſhments of wit and ſhining qualities, and to diſcountenance the moſt important and amiable virtues, by rendering the poſſeſſors of them ſubjects of ridicule. To hear ſuch dialogue as that of Congreve and Farquhar is ſufficiently injurious; but to commit it to memory, and recommend and enforce it by all the ſtudied graces of acting, muſt produce no good effect on the morals of the performer. They whoſe profeſſion it is are leſs likely to be hurt by ſuch dialogue, becauſe they are labouring in their vocation for ſubſiſtence, and often perform their parts with reluctance and as a painful taſk; but the ladies and gentlemen actors are volunteers, and may be ſuppoſed to adop whatever character or ſentiments they exhibit from the deliberate act of their own choice.

The love of the drama is by no means confined to the charms of the poetry or the propriety of the action. The diſplay of the perſon to advantage in fancied dreſſes, and in captivating attitudes, induces many to deſcend to the ſtage. Paint and gaudy dreſs diſplayed by candle-light

appear with peculiar luſtre. To have the eyes of a large aſſembly fixed upon them at a time when they are decorated to the greateſt advantage, is a circumſtance very delightful to thoſe who live but to diſplay themſelves and to court admiration. I fear I muſt affirm that the taſte for acting contributes much to the encreaſe of vanity and folly, the tranſition from which to vice and miſery is too eaſy.

What ſhall I ſay of the plain duties of domeſtic life? They appear mean, vulgar, and trifling to the parent who labours under the theatrical mania. She who melts into tears on the ſtage at the ſight of woe, can neglect her children, becauſe her attention to them muſt be in the retirements of the nurſery, where there is no audience to ſee the tears of ſenſibility and reward them with applauſe. The time, as well as attention, employed in the preparation for, and performance of a play, preclude the due degree of parental attention to a family. Unfeeling parents! who hypocritically weep to gratify your own vanity, and ſend your ſweet babes from your boſoms to feel the pangs of real woe under the harſh and careleſs treatment of a mercenary alien! While you are kneeling in all the affected pathos of tragedy, there is one whom you have brought into a wretched world, and who is calling for

you

you in the language of ſorrow; but ye will not hear. They who are the moſt apt to act ſenſibility, are often the moſt deſtitute of it. Let us ſee no more your black velvet train, your diſhevelled hair, and your white handkerchief. Be no longer deſirous of perſonating the afflicted parent on the ſtage, but go home and be the good mother in your nurſery and at your family fire-ſide.

But not only the babes are neglected, but the tender charities of man and wife are loſt by the rage of acting in private theatres. The lady performs the part of a wife or beloved heroine with ſome libertine beau, who fails not to recommend himſelf by the charms of his dreſs, perſon, and elocution; and the gentleman is the lover of ſome lovely object, to whom it is difficult to pretend a paſſion without feeling it. It muſt be allowed that ſuch ſituations are dangerous; and the low ſtate of conjugal felicity and fidelity in the preſent age may perhaps juſtify the friends of virtue and good order in the endeavour to diſcourage any prevailing practices which appear in the leaſt degree likely to diminiſh them.

I will not attempt to exaggerate my deſcription of the evils which may poſſibly ariſe from the

the prevailing taſte for ſcenical amuſements in private life. Perhaps the apprehenſions may be merely imaginary. A caution can, however, do no harm, and may poſſibly prevent it.

As the fineſt compoſitions of the drama may be ſeen exhibited in the greateſt perfection, it may be wiſhed, without offence, that the lovers of it would be contented with the excellent amuſements of the public theatres. If, indeed, they are lovers of dramatic poetry, and poſſeſs taſte and ſenſe enough to be delighted with fine compoſition independently of dreſs, ſtage-trick, and ſcenery, why will they not acquieſce in reading the beſt plays in their cloſet, or in the family circle? Pleaſure and improvement would be the certain reſult of ſuch a mode of ſpending time, without the poſſibility of danger, provided the pieces were ſelected with due judgment and delicacy of choice. Expence, and a thouſand vanities and follies to which the practice of acting in private theatres gives riſe, would thus be avoided.

The faſhionable prologue and epilogue writers and ſpeakers, and the whole tribe of gentlemen and lady actors, whatever they may pretend of taſte for poetry and a love of harmleſs

leſs amuſement, are probably actuated by a ſecret vanity, one of the moſt powerful motives of the human heart. They unhappily purſue a conduct which is likely to encreaſe rather than to leſſen a foible, which, if not vice, is the fruitful parent of it.

CHAP. VI.

Of Man as diſtinguiſhed from other Animals.

TO ſurvey an object diſtinctly, to perceive the beauties of its colour and the ſymmetry of its ſhape, it is neceſſary to place it at a diſtance from the eye. Man, therefore, it may be concluded, when he contemplates his own ſpecies, ſtands too nearly to it to be able to examine it with ſufficient accuracy *. If indeed he were elevated to the rank in which we conceive an angel, he might inveſtigate the nature of his fellow creatures with a ſkill no leſs maſterly than that with which he now anatomizes a reptile, or analyſes a plant; but in his preſent ſtate, participating the nature which he undertakes to deſcribe, the delineation muſt of neceſſity be incomplete; for though it may be ſaid, that to do juſtice to the ſubject he has only to inſpect himſelf, to examine that nature and thoſe properties of which his own boſom is conſcious, yet it muſt be remembered, that to the mind as to the eye, any exertion is more eaſy than ſelf-contemplation.

What man, therefore, can know with certainty of himſelf is but little; yet that little, as

* Ου γαρ εν τω θεωρουμενω το θεωρειν. PLOT.

it

it conſtitutes the whole of his knowledge on the moſt intereſting of all ſubjects, is to him highly momentous.

It is obvious to remark that man, after all his boaſted pre-eminence, reſembles the brutes in his birth, in his growth, in his mode of ſubſiſtance, in his decay, and in his diſſolution. In theſe particulars he muſt be numbered among the animals whom he has reduced under ſubjection, and whom he often deſpiſes as mere animated matter.

But man poſſeſſes reaſon, and is ſufficiently proud of the endowment. Reaſon, however, alone will not confer that ſuperiority which he haughtily aſſumes. Many among the tenants of the air, the water, and the grove, diſplay a degree of ſagacity which reſembles reaſon ſo nearly as ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed from it but by the microſcopical powers of metaphyſics, or the partial medium of human pride.

The dog and the horſe are the familiar companions and aſſiſtants of man, and every one may form an idea of their ſagacity, to which the epithet half-reaſoning ſcarcely does juſtice. There are many beings in the human form, and in a

ſtate

ſtate neither of idiotiſm nor inſanity, who yield to theſe animals in qualities allowed to be mental, ſuch as quickneſs of apprehenſion, cunning in the accompliſhment of a purpoſe, and in memory. Inſects and birds in the ſtructure of their neſts equal the works of human dexterity; and in the provident care of their young, while their care is neceſſary, afford a model which man may imitate to advantage.

"But this is inſtinct," interpoſes an objector. I aſk how inſtinct and reaſon differ, and whether the ſagacity of man is not inſtinct, ſimilar in ſpecies to that of the brutes, though in many inſtances infinitely ſuperior in degree?

But to what point do theſe obſervations tend? The degradation of human nature? To a purpoſe eſſentially different. They lead to a concluſion that man is diſtinguiſhed from the brutes that periſh by ſomething ſuperior to reaſon.

Philoſophers have defined man, a two legged and unfeathered animal, and have found other diſtinctions from the beſtial train, in his power of laughing and ſhedding tears. BUT THE NOBLE DISTINCTION OF HIS NATURE IS, *in*

in my opinion, HIS SENSE OF RELIGION, HIS IDEA OF HIS GOD. He alone among the numerous tribes, into which life has been inspired, poſſeſſes the glorious privilege of recognizing his benefactor. He alone looks up to Heaven as his home, and thence ſeeks comfort and ſupport amidſt the miſeries of an humiliating exile.

CHAP. VII.

Of the World in a religious View of it.

THE vanity of the world supplies an ample topic for declamatory invective. But though the florid language of declamation may diſplay to advantage the abilities of a rhetorician, and amuſe the curioſity of an idle hearer, yet it avails little in producing a permanent conviction.

General invective againſt the world and its inhabitants is indeed impiety; for they are both the creatures of God, and the moral as well as natural phenomena are conducted by his providence. Men feel that there is good in the world, and to argue againſt experience cannot perſuade, but may provoke.

The world has in it much evil; but the good preponderates: and to ſuppoſe the contrary derogates from the Deity. Even pleaſures, riches, honours, againſt which ſo much ſpecious oratory has been vainly exerted, are good in themſelves; and evil only in the exceſs, in the abuſe, and as they engroſs that attention which is due to the duties of piety to God and beneficence to man.

Mr.

Mr. Pope ſays, to enjoy is to obey; and it cannot be doubted but that the ſame benignant hand which reaches out a favour deſigned that it ſhould be received and enjoyed. The roſe was not taught to breathe fragrance, and man at the ſame time forbidden to inhale the ſweets with thoſe noſtrils which are furniſhed with organs for their perception. External objects are furniſhed in great abundance and variety, and internal ſenſes formed with exquiſite ſenſibility to receive impreſſion from them, as the wax from the ſeal.

But if the world is not contemptible, where is the truth of Solomon's emphatic ſentence againſt it—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?"

I anſwer, that the corruption of the beſt things is the production of the worſt. The vanity of the world ariſes from the folly of man. This it is which has tranſmuted gold into droſs, ſubſtantial bleſſings into miſery. This it was which unparadiſed an Eden; and, if it were not controuled, would rob even heaven of its felicity.

As this folly ariſes in great meaſure from the natural infirmity of man, and the depravity of his nature conſequent on the fall, there is too much reaſon to believe that it will continue to operate, as it has always operated, in rendering the

the world a ſcene of vanity and vexation. God made the world, and ſaw that it was good, but man has made it evil; but, ſince it is evil, it becomes man to ſeek a remedy or alleviation. And to whom can he fly for ſuccour in his diſtreſs but to his Maker, who, though he is juſtly diſpleaſed, allows himſelf to be approached as a father, and has given man leave to hope and confide that, after all his offences, he ſhall be viewed not with an eye of juſtice but of compaſſion.

From a conviction of the vanity of the world duly underſtood, ariſes not a cenſure of Divine Providence, but of our own folly; and this leads directly to that humility and conſciouſneſs of dependence which conſtitutes the firmeſt foundation for the ſuperſtructure of piety.

Religion and virtue will reſtore to the world its primitive value and beauty. Man makes the world ſuch as he experiences, either a ſcene of vanity and vexation, or of ſuch a degree of comfort and tranquillity as is reconcileable with a ſtate of probation.

CHAP. VIII.

Of an exceſſive Attachment to the World.

WHEN a congregation hears their paſtor declaiming from the pulpit, with all the vehemence of ſcholaſtic eloquence, on the folly and wickedneſs of loving any thing ſublunary, and at the ſame time obſerves that he, like other men, has many objects of affection, is it to be ſuppoſed that he preaches to any uſeful purpoſe? Do they retire to their homes and renounce their amuſements, their employments, their connections, their purſuits? Some indeed among them may be pleaſed with the preacher's performance as with the taſk of a ſchoolboy, or the recitation of an actor; but they will not feel ſuch conviction as will influence their conduct. And is it not their fault that they will not be perſuaded? No; it is becauſe the orator militates againſt common ſenſe, and againſt that reaſon which has been placed in the mind by Providence, as a lamp whoſe radiance, like the ſun, abſorbs the light of every inferior luminary.

What! exclaims the voice of common ſenſe, am I to love nothing? Then why did God place

place in my boſom a heart vibrating with ſenſibility? God has made a revelation of his will in forming my organs of feeling and powers of reflection prior to, and clearer than any written manifeſtation.

I muſt love many things in the world, children, parents, friends; comforts and conveniencies, a good character, and various kinds of excellence, whether moral, phyſical, or artificial. Beauty is ordained by nature to excite love; and if it failed, evil of a very pernicious ſort would be the conſequence. It is impoſſible to perform the indiſpenſable duties of ſocial life without ſuch a degree of love to things and perſons around us as ſtimulates to exertion. It is not eaſy nor uſual to reach any ſuperior excellence in the practice of any uſeful or ornamental art without a love of it. Extinguiſh love, and you blot out the ſun of the moral world.

When divines therefore inveigh againſt the love of the world in terms ſo general, as prohibit the leaſt attachment to the neareſt and deareſt kindred and friends, to the moſt beautiful and excellent productions of art and nature, who can liſten with patience? Infidels and profligates are multiplied by the fooliſh zeal and declamatory rhetoric of profeſſed teachers.

The paſſages of Scripture which forbid the love of the world muſt be underſtood with certain limitations. "Love not the world, neither "the things which are in the world," is certainly a prohibition expreſſed in plain and ſtrong terms; but there can be no doubt but that the word Love ſignifies in this place an exceſſive and miſplaced eagerneſs of deſire. It means ſuch a love as excludes a love of all other things, and cauſes a neglect of duty. Experience often obſerves ſuch a love of the world as devours all other affections, and fixes the ſoul to the earth; acting in the moral world like the centre of gravitation in the natural.

Affigit humi divinæ particulam auræ.

Againſt ſuch a love of the world too many diſſuaſives cannot be urged. It defeats its own purpoſes, and is the copious ſource of miſconduct and miſery.

The inordinate lovers of the world may be divided into three characters; the voluptuary, the miſer, and the ambitious man. I mean each of them exiſting in ſuch a degree as to convey the idea of idolatrous veneration for the objects of their purſuit; in a degree ſo unreaſonable as to exclude, in fondneſs for the creature, all ideas of the Creator.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Voluptuary.

UNDER the denomination of the Voluptuary I deſcribe the man who, from an exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs, cannot be ſatisfied with that ſhare of ſatisfaction which falls to the common lot of human nature, but endeavours to render the whole of his exiſtence one uninterrupted ſtate of ſenſual indulgence.

The folly of ſuch an intention, conſidering it only in a worldly view, ſufficiently appears from this circumſtance, that, ſuch is the nature of man, pleaſure of no kind can be uninterrupted. Though the external object ſhould remain immutable, the internal organ of perception would contract inſenſibility from laſſitude. The Creator has wiſely provided, that ſo ſelfiſh and uſeleſs a deſign ſhould be puniſhed in the firſt inſtance by diſappointment.

To be lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God, the giver of every comfort, argues a diſpoſition either fooliſhly thoughtleſs, or baſely ungrateful. It prevents all conſideration of the cauſes for which, it is reaſonably to be concluded,

ſuch

ſuch a creature as man was placed in ſociety. It deſtroys benevolence; for as ſoon might light and darkneſs co-exiſt in the ſame place at the ſame moment as ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs with Chriſtian benevolence. In the purſuit of perſonal gratification, the true voluptuary regards not the injuries he does to others while he can do them with impunity. He chiefly ruins the innocent and unſuſpecting; becauſe they are the moſt eaſily enſnared. He feels no compunction if he can with ſafety deſtroy the peace and comfort, the hopes and the fortunes of a family, in the gratification of a brutal paſſion. He deſtroys at the ſame time his own health, fortune, and reputation. But he thinks himſelf (and plumes himſelf in the appellation) a *man of pleaſure*.

Let the frequenters of the tavern, the brothel, the gaming-table, the horſe race, and all the tribes of faſhionable votaries of ſelfiſh gratification, conſider ſeriouſly whether they may not be comprehended among the voluptuaries whom I have thus imperfectly deſcribed. And if ſo, let them alſo think whether they are acting the part of truly reaſonable and liberal men, whether their ſyſtem is not contemptibly mean and narrow, and whether He, whom they are not uſed to think of, the God of purity, has not reaſon to be offended with them; whether, placing them-

ſelves for a moment in the place of a Creator, they would not be provoked with creatures who ſhould debaſe their nature ſo meanly, and, like them, think ſo little of their benefactor. Would they not require that the gifts of time and abilities ſhould be employed in acts of beneficence, in ſelf-improvement, in uſeful purſuits, and in promoting the general benefit of ſociety. They are wont to be proud and inſolent, and to deſpiſe the more ſober part of mankind for want of ſpirit; but if they view themſelves in a true light, they will appear mean, little, and objects of contempt or compaſſion.

But happily they have a power of raiſing themſelves again to their native height and magnitude. Faith and repentance producing their genuine fruits, amendment of life and piety, will recover the favour of Him who, knowing the infirmities of our internal frame, and the power of external objects, offers pardon on repentance, and declares that the attribute in which he delights is mercy. What a ray of comfort to the weary traveller in the path of vanity!

CHAP. X.

Of the Miſer.

I COMPREHEND under the name of Miſer, not only him who denies himſelf the common comforts of life for the ſake of ſparing the opulence in which he abounds, but thoſe alſo, in whatever profeſſion or employment, who devote all their time and attention to the accumulation of money which they neither want nor can poſſibly enjoy, which they will not communicate, and which they relinquiſh reluctantly even when they reſign their breath.

Men engaged in the buſy occupations of commerce, early and late, and from their youth to old age, commonly think themſelves, and are thought by others, laudably and honourably, as well as uſefully employed. Obſerve the Exchange, the Quay, and the Bank, what anxious looks, what airs of ſupercilious importance, what an unceaſing din and buſtle! You would think that man was created to buy and ſell ſtock, and that the happineſs of human nature depended on the price of Scrip and Conſols.

Men thus ardently and conſtantly engroſſed by Mammon, cannot be ſuppoſed to have time or inclination enough remaining to ſerve God acceptably. Theſe, and they conſtitute a very numerous diviſion of mankind, may almoſt be ſaid to have dethroned the living God of heaven and earth, and raiſed a golden image, in adoration of which they fall down proſtrate.

There is no paſſion ſo general as avarice. The principles of it are implanted in human nature for the wiſeſt purpoſes; but they are ſuffered by neglect, and even encouraged by miſconduct, to grow up to vicious exceſs.

The education of boys in this country leads immediately to the encouragement of avarice. At the moſt teachable age many are taught nothing but the arts of keeping pecuniary accounts. Not only polite learning is deſpiſed in compariſon with that which teaches to ſecure what is called the *main chance*, but religious inſtruction is alſo neglected, either as a matter which may be poſtponed without inconvenience, or as of little conſequence, when weighed in the balance with the art of thriving in trade, and raiſing a family by making a fortune.

Before any principles of virtue can be formed, or real and valuable knowledge obtained, the ſtripling is often ſent from the place of ſuperficial education to the banks of the Ganges, there to heap up enormous riches, honeſtly, if he can; but at all events, to fulfil the ultimate end of his miſſion.

Rem—ſi poſſis, recte, ſi non, quocunque modo, rem.

Many are engaged in the ſervile employments of a ſhop or warehouſe, without a religious idea impreſſed by parents or maſters, and without an allowance of time to compenſate, by perſonal application, the defects ariſing from their ſuperintendant's neglect.

Can it be wondered, ſince this is the caſe, that we are a nation of miſers, or devoted, in the language of Scripture, to the luſt of the eye, and to covetouſneſs, which is idolatry?

Thoſe who fall into the ſnare from the defect of education, and the powerful enticement of example, are indeed to be compaſſionated; but let them believe it a friendly voice which exhorts them, amidſt all their purſuits after worldly wealth, to ſeek the riches of divine grace; for "what ſhall it profit a man, if he gain the whole "world and loſe his own ſoul—and what ſhall a "man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

You have ſpent your life in ſome laborious commercial engagement, you have borne the heat of the torrid zone, for the ſake of acquiring treaſure; and, in the activity of your purſuit, you have not had time to think of God or of your own ſoul. But you ſucceeded in your purſuit. You are rich. You have houſes, lands, carriages, ſervants, every thing which luxury and pride can demand and riches ſupply. But life is ſhort, and death approaches every hour. Remember that the King of Terrors is not to be bribed by the largeſt fortune ever brought from the Eaſt Indies, and that gold is droſs in the eye of Heaven. Think of theſe things, and amidſt your purſuit of riches, learn to meditate on ſerious ſubjects, ſuch as the ſhortneſs of life, the nature of man, and his chief good, the exiſtence of a Deity, the poſſibility, at leaſt, that Chriſtianity may be true. I deſire you not to reſign your property. A competency is certainly deſireable; and I know no ſin in poſſeſſing abundance. But I deſire you to enlarge your views beyond the ſphere of material things, beyond this world; and among the many ventures you have made to improve your fortune, I deſire you to venture ſomething in expectation of that, in compariſon with which the empire of the Mogul itſelf ſhall appear contemptible--a HAPPY IMMORTALITY, AND THE FAVOUR OF THE ALMIGHTY.

Here is an intereſt, here a reverſion, which may ſurely juſtify your expending a little time and a few thoughts to ſecure it, eſpecially as you are ſafe from loſs; for though you may have a probability of obtaining ſuch advantage, you incur no danger of loſing any thing valuable.

CHAP. XI.

Of the ambitious Man.

TO minds not duly enlightened by Chriſtianity, this world appears of ſuch value, that there is no labour or danger which they refuſe to undergo, however inconſiſtent with religious duty, for the ſake of obtaining a conſpicuous place in it.

If indeed this were our home and not our inn, it would be deſirable to be labouring after power and pre-eminence. But as we are only in our journey, and that a ſhort one, it is not worth our while to contend with eagerneſs, or embroil ourſelves in rivalries, for the ſake of a little elevation above our fellow travellers. Death will bring us all to a level in a few years; and they who in an humble ſphere ſhall have made their peace with God, will then be honoured with diſtinctions, in compariſon with which earthly honours are but mockery.

Yet I do not deny that man has natural tendencies to ambition, as well as to pleaſure and to avarice. And they may certainly be gratified with innocence while they tranſgreſs not moderation,

tion, elſe they would not have been implanted in the human heart.

The principle of ambition in man is a deſire of power leſt he ſhould be oppreſſed, and of honour leſt he ſhould be deſpiſed; but the deſire of power becomes the luſt of dominion, and of reſpect, unbounded pride.

I mean to comprehend under the name of Ambition, not only the avidity of the conqueror, and the aſpiring aims of the hero and ſtateſman, but that love of diſtinction in common life which produces a reſtleſs and an envious pride.

A tranſient ſurvey of the world evinces that a great number of the human ſpecies place their chief good in being admired by each other. The faſhionable world, by whom I mean thoſe who follow faſhion in all her extremes, ſeem to have no other wiſh but to appear pleaſing or great in the eyes of perſons honoured with the ſame denomination. View the purlieus of a court, or a frequented watering or bathing place, and you will eaſily ſee that the firſt endeavour of the greater part is to be noticed and admired. Scarcely any extravagance, or affectation in dreſs or behaviour, is ſo abſurd as not to be adopted if it contributes to obtain diſtinction. Virtues,

vices, religion, irreligion, charity, or ſelfiſh parſimony, fluctuate in the degrees of eſtimation and abhorrence in which they appear according to the capricious deciſion of faſhion; and many ſeem not unwilling, for the ſake of attracting notice, to ſacrifice their beſt hopes, their moſt indiſpenſable duties, at the ſhrine of this fanciful deity.

This is a love of the world which all who entertain any right ſentiments muſt condemn as equally forbidden by reaſon and religion. In ſo great a love for the admiration of mere mortals, and thoſe too the ſillieſt of the race, there cannot be found the two great virtues required in every good man, piety to God, and beneficence to our fellow creatures. Ambition creeps as often as it flies. Its mean ſervility to the great, and its contempt of the poor, are utterly repugnant to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. Its connivance at vice, and even compliance with it for intereſted purpoſes, its time-ſerving duplicity, are no leſs inconſiſtent with moral virtue. Its conſtant attention to its objects, to courting the great, and to ſeeking opportunities of acceſs to the powerful, occupy too much of the time and thoughts to permit a due degree of attention to God, and to ſuch duties as our own perſonal frailties and the wants of ſociety demand.

Exceſſive

Exceſſive ambition is chiefly viſible in the political world and in the profeſſions. The mercantile part of mankind are employed in amaſſing wealth, and ſeldom think of raiſing their families to rank and honour but by raiſing a fortune.

In the clerical profeſſion ambition too often allures her votaries to a behaviour highly unbecoming as well as irreligious.

But I cheerfully turn from a tender topic. Let us examine the profeſſion of the law. As by a ſtrange abuſe, civil and hereditary honours have been particularly laviſhed on this very ſecular profeſſion, more than common ambition is found in the profeſſion of the law. Such is the eagerneſs of purſuit in this profeſſion, that the mind ſeems to be chained down, during the whole period of life, to worldly concerns. The profeſſional buſineſs of itſelf is indeed entirely ſecular; and there is a private concern at the ſame time going on, the aggrandizement of a name and family, which, added to the public labours, leaves little time and attention for religion. The world admires the abilities and aſſiduity of the ſucceſsful lawyer; and it would be ſurpriſing if the world did not admire its own ardent votaries. The title perhaps at laſt arrives, and the ſucceſsful candidate dies worn out with the labours of courting this world.

With

With reſpect to the other, he muſt offer as an apology for his inattention to its concerns, that he had not time to think of it. But in the eye of ſenſible and conſiderate men, what is the applauſe of the world, a coronet, and a family ennobled, in compariſon with the objects propoſed to our hopes and endeavours by Chriſtianity? Many things are commonly done in the law, of which it may be candidly ſaid, that they are hard and unchriſtian, if not abſolutely diſhoneſt, even by the moſt celebrated profeſſors of it, in the courſe of a long and multifarious practice. If Chriſtianity be true, ſo long and warm an attachment to the world, its buſineſs, and its rewards, cannot be venial.

Thoſe who engage in political concerns, and aſpire at civil honours, uſually purſue their objects with an ardour which engroſſes the whole mind; and conſequently leaves no room for attention to religion. How ſhall they work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling, whoſe days and nights are given to the ſtudy of politics, and the paying court to patrons in power? Ability in the ſenate, and ſucceſs attending a long courſe of exertion, appear objects of ſuch magnitude, that every thing which religion has to offer is diminiſhed on compariſon, and too often eſteemed only the contrivance of prieſtcraft cooperating with the arts of government.

I all

I all along proceed upon the hypotheſis that Chriſtianity is true; and that being the caſe, all the ambitious in exceſs, that is, all who purſue fame and grandeur without attention to the King of Kings, are in a deplorable ſtate, though they may ſhine with ſtars, ermine, ribbons, and coronets.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Man of the World.

THE luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, are the ſcriptural names for voluptuouſneſs, avarice, and ambition. I have already conſidered them ſeparately, and I now conſider them in union, and conſtituting that admired character, the MAN OF THE WORLD.

The man of the world is a compoſition of luſt, covetouſneſs, and pride. Ugly names indeed! and he is therefore particularly ſolicitous to varniſh them with graceful manners, ornamental accompliſhments, and all the plauſibility of affected elegance and virtue.

The man of the world founds his ſyſtem on two hypotheſes, both of which are erroneous; the firſt, that this life is the whole of man's exiſtence; and the ſecond, that, ſuch being the caſe, the *chief good* of man conſiſts in gratifying luſt, avarice, and ambition.

This life cannot be the whole of man's exiſtence, on the ſuppoſition on which I proceed, that Chriſtianity is true; and the experience of

of man previouſly to revelation, had determined the queſtion, that health, virtue, temperance, were more deſirable than any external advantage.

But, Chriſtianity being true, vicious gratifications cannot for a moment be ſuppoſed to conſtitute the felicity of man. They are, on the contrary, ſnares which lead to perdition; and to beware of them is the very eſſence of Chriſtian wiſdom.

The man of the world, notwithſtanding all arguments from reaſon and revelation, gives himſelf up, at the various ſtages of life, and in various circumſtances and degrees, to the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. The man of the world then, however admired in the private circle, applauded in public, honoured with titles, elevated in rank, and loaded with riches, is that unhappy man who is ſaid in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament to be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: And let him remember, that in the book it is written—

"Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adul-
"terers, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor co-
"vetous, nor extortioners, ſhall enter the king-
"dom of Heaven."

He

He muſt ſee from this paſſage only, and many more equally in point might be cited, that it is impoſſible at the ſame time to be a man of the world and a Chriſtian.

This is a plain truth without diſguiſe on one hand, and on the other, without exaggeration; and with earneſt affection I entreat every man of the world to retire a little from the gaudy and deceitful ſcene, from admirers, from flatterers, from ſeducers, to the death-bed ſcene, to the houſe of mourning, and there endeavour to view his own condition in its proper colour. Happy will it be if he ſhall ſee the things which belong unto his peace in this his day, and before death terminates the golden opportunity.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Danger of being led by Imitation without Principles of Religion.

IT is thought the ſafeſt mode of advancing in the journey of life to follow the footſteps of others, who, from pre-eminence of rank and reputed abilities, may be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the leaſt fallible knowledge. To derive inſtruction from books, time, attention, and judgment, are neceſſary; but to tread where others have trodden before, little more direction is required than to uſe the eyes. The greater number therefore, from mere indolence, give themſelves no farther concern in ſettling their moral and religious conduct, than to obſerve the behaviour and ſentiments of thoſe to whom wealth and civil honours have given a ſuperiority of condition.

But unhappily many of thoſe who are thus ſelected as models for imitation are themſelves under the influence of the moſt fatal deluſion. They have arrived at the pre-eminence which gives them the authority of guides, by purſuing thoſe objects which are merely ſecular; and the artful purſuit of which conſtitutes them truly *men of the world*; who, inſtead of being guides

to

to happineſs, might often be conſidered as beacons, rendered conſpicuous, that they may admoniſh the traveller of danger in the vicinity.

There cannot be a more pernicious miſtake than to ſuppoſe wiſdom or right conduct the neceſſary attendant of ſplendour of appearance and elevation of rank, and, in conſequence of ſo weak an opinion, to follow the example of the rich and great in affairs which eſſentially concern the happineſs or miſery of life. It is ſafe and proper to imitate them, with judgment and moderation, in the indifferent modes of dreſſing, entering a room, dancing, or external behaviour; but to renounce religion, conſcience, virtue, health, and peace, becauſe ſome leaders of the faſhion ſeem to have renounced them, deſerves to be ſtigmatized by a harſher name than folly.

Truth is immutable. Whether the majority is for or againſt her, ſhe remains unaltered. Let all therefore who ſeriouſly wiſh to reach as much happineſs and perfection as they are capable of, employ their reaſon with humility and patience in the purſuit of her; and when they have found her, which on a faithful enquiry they will eaſily do, let them follow her guidance with a firm attachment, uninfluenced by the falſe, though brilliant lights of fickle faſhion.

I mean

I mean not to insinuate that all the votaries of fashion are either irreligious or profligate. Many, I am convinced, from a false modesty, and a respect for the world which it does not deserve, appear less virtuous and less religious than they really are. But it is the appearance which seduces; and the appearance of profligacy in those who are able to grace every deformity with the tinsel of rank and riches, is apt to allure the unthinking herd into an imitation, fatal to their virtue.

Too much precaution, therefore, cannot be used in guarding all who hope to be proficients in Christian philosophy against that influence, which seduces more to vice, folly, and infidelity, than any books of the most ingenious sceptics, I mean the INFLUENCE OF GRANDEUR AND WORLDLY POWER, OPERATING ON THE THOUGHTLESS BY A BAD EXAMPLE.

CHAP. XIV.

Of a moral Life without Religion.

"I PAY my debts. I take care to injure no "body. I amuſe myſelf as I like, with- "out intruding on the amuſements of others. I "am temperate, for I find temperance conducive "to health, comfort, and long life. I am an "obliging neighbour, a conſtant friend, a peace- "able ſubject; but, after all, I am not religious. "Can I be eaſy without religion? I truſt to a "good life.

"For modes of faith let graceleſs zealots fight,
"His can't be wrong, whoſe life is in the right."

Such is the ſoliloquy of many a man who maintains a decent character in ſociety, and at the ſame time values himſelf in a freedom from what he calls the ſhackles of ſuperſtition. But virtue without religion, ſince Chriſtianity has appeared, is certainly of a queſtionable kind. The voluntary renunciation of a religion like the Chriſtian is at firſt ſight a circumſtance ſufficient to render any virtue ſuſpected. A truly good mind will not eaſily relinquiſh its hopes, its conſolations, its friendly influence on human happineſs and ſociety. So that there is great reaſon

to

to ſuſpect, from the very pretenſion to morality without religion, that the virtue of the pretender is defective and ſpurious.

Such virtue, though ſpecious in appearance, will be found when duly analyſed nothing but pride; a vice the moſt repugnant to real goodneſs, the ſource of injuſtice to man and impiety to God, of every vanity and of every folly, and a vice againſt which the diſpleaſure of Heaven is particularly pointed.

Many cauſes of a worldly kind concur to make men adopt the appearance, and even the practice of various virtues. Reputation is in general neceſſary to ſucceſs in the projects of ambition and avarice. A man is often temperate and juſt, becauſe the character of intemperance and injuſtice would retard his advancement or injure his intereſt; or becauſe his habits of virtue have been early formed by the care of parents and the influence of example; or becauſe he is little expoſed to temptation, or is ſecured from many vices by conſtitutional averſion, indifference, or infirmity.

An inoffenſive conduct ariſing from any of theſe cauſes is entitled to reſpect, or at leaſt to an exemption from ſevere cenſure; but it cannot deſerve

deſerve the praiſe nor the reward of virtue proceeding from principle.

This irreligious virtue is in moſt inſtances little to be depended upon; for as it reſpects nothing but this world and the opinion of man, whenever the intereſts of this world can be ſerved, or the opinions of others ſecured by ſecrecy, there remains little to preſerve it inviolate.

Man is ſo weak, and ſo prone to fall into vice and miſery, that it is certainly unſafe to reſolve to walk without guidance and protection, when both are offered by an Almighty arm.

Whatever ſophiſts, philoſophers, metaphyſicians, and witlings may ſay on virtue being its own reward, on the fitneſs of things, and on many refined ſubjects totally unintelligible, and totally unregarded by the majority of mankind, I will recommend it to all, to ſtrengthen the force of virtue by erecting round her the ramparts of religion.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Honour of Men of the World as a Subſtitute for Religion.

A SENSE of honour, as it is commonly underſtood in the intercourſe of ſociety, means a determination to avoid contempt, by avoiding whatever contradicts the prejudices or practices of people of faſhion.

If vices are faſhionable, they become perfectly conſiſtent with this ſenſe of honour; indeed they ſeem ornaments neceſſary to complete the character of a faſhionable man of honour. Experience proves, that ſome practices and opinions utterly inconſiſtent with virtue, are often faſhionable, or at leaſt not deemed diſgraceful in the circle of faſhion.

The following habits and practices are rather eſteemed ornamental accompliſhments to the modern man of honour: gallantry in all its enormities, duelling, gaming, incurring debt without the power and inclination to repay, pride and contempt of others, however virtuous, who are without rank and riches, extravagance in all expences, luxury, voluptuouſneſs, oſtentation, effeminacy;

effeminacy; or, in the language of Scripture, every vice and folly which can ariſe from the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, provided a certain appearance of external decency is duly preſerved.

And this proud overbearing principle, which has every appearance of originating from the grand adverſary of mankind, is to ſuperſede the neceſſity of any other guidance. The dictates of the ſenſe of honour are capable of directing thoſe who poſſeſs it, if you will believe themſelves, more ſafely and infallibly in the path of rectitude and happineſs than any light deriveable from philoſophy and religion.

I fear that He who requires purity of heart will not accept even laudable actions when they proceed from evil motives; but I am ſure that evil actions committed to pleaſe the world, preſumptuouſly and boaſtingly repeated, in defiance of all the lights of conſcience and revelation, muſt, in his ſight, become ſingularly malignant and offenſive.

How mean will appear that proud race who now ſtrut about the earth with ſwords ready to ſhed the blood of any one who offends them, when the ſentence ſhall be pronounced—"Depart "from me, ye workers of iniquity."

I hope to leave it forcibly impreſſed on the minds of vicious men of honour, that, if Chriſtianity be true, their conduct, under this principle, is repugnant to the will of God, and that their ſtate, though admired by many, and perhaps envied and imitated by the thoughtleſs, is truly dangerous and diſhonourable.

When death approaches they will wiſh that in the ſeaſon of health and youth they had been led by the ſenſe of religion, inſtead of a ſenſe of honour; a principle too often unconnected with common honeſty, and invented and recommended by the pride and wickedneſs of the human heart in its unregenerate ſtate. "The beginning of "pride," ſays the Son of Sirach, "is when one "departeth from God, and his heart is turned "away from his Maker."

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Knowledge of one's Self, the Nature of Man, and our dependent State.

IF one can ſuppoſe a man never to have ſeen the face of the earth but in the month of May, one may conclude that he would ſcarcely be able to form an idea of its deſolate appearance in December. So men in the midſt of youth, health, ſeducing pleaſure, riches, honours, flattery, and the obſequiouſneſs of all around them, can with difficulty conceive the evil day which nevertheleſs awaits both them and all the ſons of men.

The miſery of man is a topic on which it is unneceſſary to enlarge. All men are convinced of it at ſome time in their lives by experience, but all men do not ſufficiently reflect upon it, nor prepare an antidote againſt it, nor alleviations under it.

Men aſcend to the ſkies and dive into the earth in purſuit of knowledge; but they deſcend not into themſelves, they examine not their own nature.

If

If they courted an acquaintance with themſelves, they would find their own frailty and miſery the moſt diſtinguiſhing parts of their character; and they would be led by the ſight to ſeek ſtrength and comfort where alone it can be found, in the favour of the Creator.

In a ſtate in which we are liable every moment to be deprived of all our ſouls hold dear, of relations, friends, fortune, fame, health, our ſenſes, and our peace; a religion which offers but a hope of comfort and ſupport from an almighty power, ought to be cheriſhed as the moſt valuable treaſure, far more precious than the Indias can beſtow, far more deſirable to a thinking mind and a feeling heart, than the jewels of the brighteſt diadem in the univerſe.

Yet how little is this treaſure valued in the buſy walks of pleaſure, avarice, and ambition! The moſt trifling allurements of the world will induce men to poſtpone or diſmiſs all thoughts of God and their dependent ſtate.

But the evil day of ſickneſs, or old age, or dejection of ſpirits, will come, and will come in peculiar horrors to thoſe who have made no religious preparation. Things will then appear in a ſhape and colour totally different from that which

they deceitfully assumed in the hour of prosperity. Think, O man, before the evil day comes, and mitigate the evil by securing a retreat in the storm under the wing of the Deity.

Thou tottereſt, like the infant unable to walk without the nurſe's aid, when thou ventureſt to walk alone; but God is thy nurſing parent, and if thou wilt not in the fooliſh pride of thy heart reject his guidance, he will lead thee with all the tender ſolicitude of a parent, ſtrengthen thy weakneſs, and conſole thy miſery.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Neceſſity of being awakened to a Senſe of Religion.

IN a buſy intercourſe with the world, and eſpecially in the ſeaſon of health and proſperity, man is wonderfully prone to fall into ſuch a degree of inſenſibility in all that relates to religion, as is characteriſed in the forcible language of Scripture by the appellations of Sleep and Death. If any man gives himſelf the trouble to recollect the time in which he has ſcarcely thought of his ſpiritual ſtate, or thought of it with great indifference, he will find it a very large portion of his exiſtence.

An habitual inſenſibility becomes very difficult to be removed. It often ends in a diſeaſe which may be termed a lethargy; a diſeaſe fatal to the ſpiritual life.

The ſymptoms of this diſeaſe may be eaſily underſtood. Men who are ſeized with it appear totally immerſed in the purſuits of worldly objects, either think not at all of religion, or think of it as beneath their ſerious notice, as the contrivance of policy and prieſtcraft, as fit only to

awe fools, or women and children, as an interruption of real and important buſineſs in life, by which they always mean the purſuit of pleaſure, money, or advancement. They conſider the Sabbath Day as an injurious loſs of time, ſeldom attend the church, but ſettle pecuniary accounts at home, write letters, ride out on parties of pleaſure, or travel. They are extremely apt to cavil at the Scriptures, and ridicule all pious people as weak or enthuſiaſtic.

Other ſymptoms of this lethargy of the ſoul might be enumerated, but they are ſimilar to thoſe already ſpecified, and are obvious to obſervation.

A life indeed led without faith and repentance is a ſcene of darkneſs and deluſion. To live without God in the ſpiritual world, is like living without the ſun in the natural. When the ſoul is turned away from God, a thick darkneſs overſpreads it, and night comes on; but artificial lights are ſupplied by the world, whoſe brilliancy is deceitful, and of ſhort continuance.

There cannot be a greater misfortune than this ſpiritual inſenſibility; and God Almighty ſuffers it not to become extreme but by man's own voluntary preſumption and pride. He ſends ſome affliction,

affliction, which ſpeaks with a warning voice. It is heard for a moment. It is ſilent again. The world approaches once more with all its allurements, and the unhappy patient relapſes into a fatal ſecurity.

Extreme ſickneſs, and the evident approach of death, uſually awaken the dull ſpirit at laſt; and few, however thoughtleſs they may have been in life, die without a pious ejaculation. Sickneſs, and the dread of diſſolution, though efficacious, are painful remedies; how much better to be prepared by reaſon and reflection; to ariſe from ſleep voluntarily, and without a call ſo loud and ſo alarming to the human ear.

The obvious means of reſuſcitating the ſleeping ſoul are prayer and attention to exhortation. The word of God preached in due ſeaſon, and attended to with faith and humility, has had wonderful effects on the moſt obdurate heart. Happy, where the love of the world has not precluded all affection for things ſacred and divine.

But the death of ſome dear relation, ſome beloved of the ſoul, is perhaps the moſt awakening ſcourge of Providence. Then the feeling heart is exceedingly ſorrowful, and learns to look up for comfort to the ſource of all conſolation.

Whoever has not worn out his ſenſibility in the practices of vice, muſt on ſuch occaſions receive a deep impreſſion. Let it be every one's care to watch leſt the deceits of the world efface it too ſoon.

And here I cannot help lamenting the faſhion of the age, which, on the departure of a parent, a child, or a wife, drives all the relations from the *houſe of mourning*, and from the ſide of the grave. No ſooner has the heart of ſome beloved object ceaſed to palpitate, than the family, which ought to mourn over the poor monument of mortality, and receive a due impreſſion from the melancholy ſcene, is hurried away to ſome diſtant reſidence, there to ſeek in diſſipation, as ſoon as decency will permit, a total oblivion of the dear departed.

Providence gave feelings to man on ſuch occaſions productive, when permitted to take effect, of great improvement in all that concerns the ſtate of the ſoul. Theſe are the things which, if not prevented by our own perverſeneſs, would awaken us from the ſleep—THE SLEEP OF DEATH.

In the entertaining voyages of a late great circumnavigator, we read, that in aſcending a mountain

mountain in Terra del Fuego, a tendency to ſleep ſeized the travellers, almoſt irreſiſtibly. But if the tendency was indulged, the conſequence was death. This remarkable effect bears a great analogy to what happens in our ſpiritual journey, our pilgrimage through the world; and all who are wiſe will avoid that ſleep, from which they may wake no more in this world, and wake only at laſt to miſery.

I cannot do a more beneficial ſervice to my fellow-creatures than to admoniſh them of the danger of falling inſenſibly, from a love of the world, into this dreadful ſtupor of the ſoul. Thouſands and tens of thouſands feel themſelves perfectly at eaſe on the ſubject; but let them beware leſt their want of feeling be found the numbneſs of a mortification. The ſurgeon pronounces the limb ſafe while pain is felt; but immediately prepares to amputate, or gives up hope of life, on the diſcontinuance of ſenſation.

A total freedom from ſolicitude on the ſubject of religion is certainly a moſt alarming ſymptom; and let us beware in time, leſt that wretched permiſſion may be given us, *Sleep on now, and take your reſt.*

CHAP. XVIII.

Of neglecting Religion, and avoiding religious Offices through the fear of being deemed guilty of Hypocriſy.

UNDER the falſe but ſpecious appearance of ſingular piety and righteouſneſs to promote the mean purpoſes of ſecular intereſt, is a deceit which juſtly deſerves the contempt of man and the vengeance of heaven. The peculiar deformity of hypocriſy has given ſo general and cordial a diſguſt to it, that moſt men are fearful of exhibiting any appearance of religion, leſt they ſhould be ſuſpected of hypocriſy.

The averſion to hypocriſy is juſt; but tranſgreſſing the proper limits, it has been a fruitful cauſe of irreligion.

He who habitually neglects the various external offices of religion, which were wiſely inſtituted to preſerve a regard to its eſſence, will inſenſibly become leſs attentive to it than he ever intended. And he who, fearing the imputation of over-righteouſneſs, and the appellation of a ſaint or methodiſt, treats things ſacred with affected levity, will in time loſe all proper awe of every

every thing that is worthy of religious veneration. He will be in danger of loſing the ſubſtance when he diſregards the genuine and unaffected appearances reſulting from it.

To be aſhamed of Jeſus Chriſt and his religion is to carry the abhorrence of hypocriſy to a dreadful extreme. To be a Chriſtian indeed, is to be a greater character than was ever poſſeſſed by the renowned heroes and philoſophers of all Pagan antiquity. And he who, on proper occaſions, is unwilling to ſhew that he is a Chriſtian, and that he duly eſteems all the ordinances neceſſary to preſerve a ſenſe of religion, has not an adequate idea of the dignity of the character he claims, and the value of the religion which he profeſſes.

Let us manfully avow what we ſincerely believe, and not preſume to inſult the great King of Kings, by ſhewing that we eſteem the external inſignia of his ſervice badges of diſgrace. The cauſe of Chriſtianity would flouriſh more than it has yet done, if all who feel its truth would, under the guidance of diſcretion, *let their light ſo ſhine before men, that they might glorify their Father which is in heaven.*

There is no occaſion to proceed to any extremes, to affect an appearance of being *righteous overmuch*,

evermuch, or better than our neighbours. Such appearances are uſually ſuſpicious. But it is certainly unmanly and diſgraceful to a Chriſtian to fear to avow his principles whenever the occaſion requires the avowal; or to be aſhamed of ſuch converſation and behaviour as becomes the profeſſed diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt. It is a mean compliance with the vicious part of the world; a deſertion of our poſt from mere cowardice; a behaviour in a ſubject which would juſtly provoke an earthly potentate.

Let it be our firſt care to be ſincere, and in acting as that ſincerity, under the direction of a manly prudence, ſhall urge us, let us be totally regardleſs of the imputation of hypocriſy. The imputation may ariſe only from the ill-nature and envy of incompetent judges; but God knows the heart, and the perſecution of the wicked will only tend to render our obedience to him more acceptable.

Dare to be what you are, and be more ſolicitous to be than to appear. Truth indeed may be ſecure, that though for a time ſhe may be miſrepreſented, ſhe will at laſt be known and honoured; for there is a feature in her face which, like light, ſtrikes the organ with irreſiſtible force whenever the artificial obſtacles to the view of it

are

are removed. She has no occaſion to be uneaſy at the malice of thoſe who beſtow on her the name of hypocriſy.

Opinionum commenta delet dies, &c.

It is certainly right to ſeek to pleaſe our fellow-creatures by every inſtance of behaviour conſiſtent with honour and conſcience; but to ſtand more in awe of them, of their opinion, of their repreſentations of us, than of our common Lord and Creator, is at once a moſt irrational conduct and an inſult offered to the Majeſty of heaven.

CHAP. XIX.

Religion originates neither in Prieſtcraft, nor Weakneſs, nor Superſtition; but is founded on the evident Suggeſtions of Reaſon, and the natural Feelings of the human Mind.

MEN who ſtudy this world only, and value themſelves on a ſubordinate wiſdom, which deſerves only the name of cunning, are apt to conclude that religion and all its ſalutary reſtraints are derived from the policy of civil power erecting its fabric on the baſis of the people's ſuperſtition. The prieſthood is ſuſpected of having been called in to add a main pillar to the maſſy pile of political architecture.

While this idea prevails, and great ingenuity has been exerted to diſſeminate it, every attempt to recommend the doctrines of religion in general, or of Chriſtianity in particular, becomes ineffectual. It is conſidered either as a crafty cooperation with power, or as the fooliſh enterprize of a zealot's infatuation.

But it is evident from the deductions of reaſon, and the native feelings of the heart, that religion owes

owes its origin to cauſes far more reſpectable than either policy or folly.

To enter the liſts with the Atheiſts would be to engage in more than in theſe ſhort chapters I have been able to undertake. Indeed after all the attempts of libertines to attribute religion to policy, it has been juſtly doubted whether a real Atheiſt ever exiſted.

If any other proof is neceſſary than the viſible works of the creation, every thing we ſee and feel around; I muſt refer to the fine arguments produced at the lecture founded by Mr. Boyle.

I will only deſire my reader to conſider what he has himſelf felt, and what he has obſerved others feel, under the preſſure of affliction, in the hour of ſickneſs, and at the ſuppoſed approach of diſſolution. In oppoſition to all that wit, or malice, or miſapplied ingenuity have advanced, in thoſe circumſtances he has found in himſelf, and obſerved in others, an irreſiſtible impulſe to ſeek comfort and aſſiſtance from that Supreme Being, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life.

Could this feeling, I will aſk him, ariſe from prieſtcraft, worldly policy, or mere folly and infirmity? Was there not ſomething in his boſom which

which told him, in language awfully convincing, Verily there is a God.

And if that ſentiment is founded on truth on a death bed, ſince truth is immutable, is it not founded in truth throughout the whole of our exiſtence, in the day of youth, health, and proſperity; and is it not wiſdom to be influenced by it before the evil day arrives, when there is danger leſt it ſhould be too late for piety to atone for paſt omiſſions, and the long continued errors of pride and preſumption.

Death has been called *the great Teacher*. Few approach him without learning the moſt important truths. Wits, ſceptics, minute philoſophers, bow at laſt to this ſovereign inſtructor, and acknowledge the vanity of their own imaginations when weighed in the balance with the leſſons of DEATH.

I requeſt then the ſcoffer at religion, the ſceptic, and the profeſſed libertine, to permit the ideas concerning the truth of religion which ariſe in extreme ſickneſs, the loſs of thoſe we love, the apprehenſion of immediate death, or any other alarming ſituation, to influence his principles and practices through life.

They

They will then be far from employing their abilities in the malignant office of depriving others of that religion which affords ſolid comfort under every circumſtance, but will rather moſt cheerfully and gratefully ſeek their own happineſs in faith and piety.

CHAP. XX.

Of attributing Religion to the Prejudices of Education, and the undue Influence of parental and ſocial Example.

AMONG the many groundleſs cauſes aſſigned for the prevalence of religion in the world, one of the commoneſt is the prejudice of education, and the influence of example.

The pretended philoſophers are fond of aſſerting that man is rendered, by the reſtraints of education, an animal totally different from that which he was originally formed by nature. They allow no argument to be drawn in favour of religion from the univerſality of religious ſentiments, becauſe, they urge, that this univerſality ariſes from the crafty or fooliſh ſuggeſtions of parents, who teach the doctrines of religion as the moſt effectual means of enforcing and ſecuring filial obedience.

But does a tendency to religion appear in thoſe only who have been religiouſly educated? The moſt neglected ſons and daughters of Adam, thoſe who, like the wild aſſes colt, are left to themſelves in their infancy, are found to be as ſtrongly impreſſed

impreſſed with an idea of a God as the moſt cultivated diſciples of the moſt refined philoſophy. They cannot give a rational account of any ſyſtem; but they fear God, and depend upon his ſupport in their afflictions.

I was much pleaſed with hearing a remarkable inſtance of piety in the very outcaſts of ſociety, in thoſe whom nobody inſtructs and nobody knows, the vagrants diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of Gypſies. A large party had requeſted leave to reſt their weary limbs, during the night, in the ſhelter of a barn; and the owner took the opportunity of liſtening to their converſation. He found their laſt employment at night and their firſt in the morning was prayer. And though they could teach their children nothing elſe, they taught them to ſupplicate in an uncouth but pious language, the aſſiſtance of a friend in a world where the diſtinctions of rank are little regarded. I have been credibly informed that theſe poor neglected brethren are very devout, and remarkably diſpoſed to attribute all events to the interpoſition of a particular providence. But can their piety be attributed to the influence of education and the prevalence of example? They have no education, and they are too far removed from all communication with ſociety to feel the ſeducing power of prevalent example.

Whoever

Whoever is converſant with the relations of voyagers and travellers muſt know that the principal employment of many ſavage nations is the due obſervance of religious ceremonies, and that all, with not a ſingle exception fully aſcertained, are fully convinced of the exiſtence of a God, and of his actual, though inviſible government. But in ſavage nations there appears to be no education, and there is not, it may be concluded, political cunning or wiſdom ſufficient to have rendered religion a faſhion, with a deſign to diffuſe it by example, and facilitate obedience.

The truth is, religious ſentiments riſe in the heart of man, unſpoiled by vice and uncorrupted by ſophiſtry, no leſs naturally than ſentiments of love, or any other affection.

All that education effects in the countries of Chriſtianity is to direct the natural tendencies to religion to that revelation of the divine will which conſtitutes Chriſtianity. Education, or ſubſequent inſtruction, is certainly neceſſary to teach this; for a man is not born a Chriſtian; but the knowledge of any ſcience taught in infancy might as well be called the prejudice of education as the knowledge of Chriſtianity.

CHAP. XXI.

Of purſuing the Art of Speaking to the Excluſion of other Arts.

Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentur.
HOR.

IT is one reaſon why eloquence among the ancients had more effect than among the moderns, that they had not the art of printing, and that the moſt diffuſive method of communicating ideas in the age of Demoſthenes and Cicero was oral utterance. The modes of tranſcribing written copies were ſlow, and the opportunities of diſtributing them few and incommodious. All therefore who wiſhed to raiſe themſelves to importance, or to benefit the public by their knowledge or their wiſdom, ſtudied to accompliſh themſelves in the arts of oratory.

But in modern times, and eſpecially in England, there is nothing which cannot be communicated in a few hours to larger multitudes than ever were aſſembled in an auditory, or than could poſſibly hear the voice of the loudeſt orator. Every day, and almoſt every hour of the day, teems with newſpapers; but among the Athenians, when they deſired to hear ſomething new,

new, it was necenary to aſk for intelligence of ſtrangers as they arrived in the port, or to liſten to the popular rhetoricians in the public aſſemblies.

But not only from newſpapers, but from books alſo and pamphlets, the moderns are able to draw information, and to catch the fire of public virtue or ſedition, perhaps more effectually than it was ever diffuſed by the harangue of a ſpeaker.

The art of printing, the wonderful diſpatch with which it is practiſed, the expeditious modes of publication, and the general love of reading whatever comes recommended by the grace of novelty, have rendered the art of ſpeaking, or artificial rhetoric, far leſs requiſite in modern times than in the ages of antiquity. Yet it is ſtill ſufficiently uſeful and ornamental to juſtify great care in its cultivation.

But there have ariſen teachers who have laboured to perſuade the world that the art of ſpeaking ought to be conſidered as the very firſt accompliſhment of human nature. Every opprobrious epithet is beſtowed on the dead languages, and they who have devoted their lives to the ſtudy of them are repreſented as the ſlaves of prejudice. I cannot help thinking that their

zeal

zeal in favour of an art which they have ſtudied, has carried them far beyond the limits of good ſenſe and propriety.

Their precepts tend to make men declaimers in common converſation; than which character few can be leſs agreeable. Let us ſuppoſe every man who ſits in a ſocial circle talking only to diſtinguiſh himſelf for his powers of oratory. All would be ſpeakers and none hearers. Such ſpeakers ought to hire an audience to liſten to them at ſo much an hour. The ſight of ſuch a meeting would be ludicrous and entertaining; but the ears would be diſguſted by jargon and diſſonance. The eaſe and the ſimplicity of natural converſation would be loſt amidſt the efforts of art. Men of ſenſe, to whom nature has given the organs of utterance without defect, will never be at a loſs to expreſs themſelves with propriety, and with ſufficient grace, though they ſhould never have cultivated the art of ſpeaking in the arrogant ſchools of modern rhetoricians.

Much is ſaid on the defective ſtate of pulpit elocution. There are certainly defects in it; but I am not convinced that the precepts or examples of theatrical teachers, will introduce a ſpecies of pulpit oratory in every reſpect to be approved. It has long been agreed, that the

elocution and action which become the ſtage are unfit for the pulpit. For what reaſon? Certainly becauſe they diſplay too much art, or rather artifice, to appear with grace or dignity in him who is to ſpeak the truth, as it is in Jeſus, with all ſincerity and ſimplicity. Some preachers are careleſs and indifferent, and on that account greatly reprehenſible; but it is difficult to believe that men of ſenſe and liberal education, if they are earneſtly devout, and willing to exert themſelves, cannot deliver their harangues from the pulpit without the inſtructions of a player. I believe there is reaſon to think that moſt players might receive inſtruction, even in their own favourite art of ſpeaking, from a clergyman of ſound ſenſe regularly and duly cultivated; but men of this character have uſually learned with their other virtues the virtue of modeſty. One hint of advice to them on the art of ſpeaking will, if followed, become more ſerviceable than all the inſtructions of a mercenary declaimer. Let them ſpeak ſufficiently loud, diſtinctly, and earneſtly. Nature and truth will prevail over the hearts of their hearers, when trick and artifice ſhall aſſault in vain.

I beg leave to aſk the pretending orators, whether the theatric manner would be tolerated at the bar? Judge, jury, plaintiff, and defendant, would

would unite in diſapproving it. They would feel ſentiments of anger and contempt at it. They would ſuppoſe themſelves to be inſulted by it. And the advocate would immediately ſee the neceſſity of unlearning that part of his preparation for the eloquence of the bar which he had learned in the ſchool of the theatre.

In what department then is this ſort of oratory which the players recommend really uſeful? Not in converſation, not in the pulpit, not at the bar. It muſt therefore be remanded to the place whence it came, to the ſtage.

And however warmly the patrons of the art of ſpeaking may declaim againſt my doctrine, I ſhall not be afraid to maintain, that it is infinitely more advantageous to cultivate the *art of thinking* than the *art of ſpeaking*. A ſtore of various knowledge, acquired by a good education with an improved judgment, and with but a tranſient attention to the art of ſpeaking, as it is ſyſtematically taught, will furniſh a man endowed with a natural good ear and voice with ſufficient eloquence. The mind, the ſource from which all true eloquence muſt flow, is firſt to be adorned. A man ſhould learn, like the diſciples of Pythagoras, to be ſilent a conſiderable time, that he may be able to fix his attention on books.

Great talkers are but little thinkers. One might indeed ſuppoſe, that where there are many words there muſt alſo be many ideas; but experience evinces the poſſibility of talking long, loudly, and even rhetorically, without knowledge, without judgment, and without common ſenſe.

Does not reaſon ſuggeſt, that the ſolid qualities ſhould be ſtudied before the ornamental? On what is the ornament to be fixed if there is no ſubſtantial ſupport beneath it? The beauties of the Corinthian capital reſt on a ſolid ſhaft. Does not reaſon preſcribe the neceſſity of accumulating a ſtock of materials before we venture on expence and conſumption? How can the water flow in the pipes of conveyance if there is none in the reſervoir? How ſhall he be a ſpeaker who, having attended only or chiefly to utterance, has neglected to provide a ſtore of materials? Senſe, knowledge, judgment, I repeat, are firſt to be ſought, and when they are acquired, a very little attention to rules and practice will make an orator competently ſkilled for all the good purpoſes of his profeſſion. It muſt be remembered, that a good man will not qualify himſelf merely from vanity for oſtentation, but to do good, and to become really reſpectable by ſolid merit.

merit. But will words, however ſmoothly and affectedly uttered, ſtand in the place of deeds, or of habitual and well confirmed ſkill in an art, ſcience, or profeſſion?

Indeed this is a wordy age, and ſpeaking has done much more injury to the public than benefit. Public buſineſs is impeded, doubts and difficulties unneceſſarily raiſed, and faction and ſedition foſtered by pretenders to oratory. *Obe jam ſatis eſt!* Let not the next generation be educated, according to the earneſt advice of ſome, merely as *praters*. An age of praters! What a misfortune to thoſe whoſe ſituation condemns them to be hearers of them! Indeed the nation at large, and the cauſe of learning and virtue, muſt ſuffer greatly whenever the taſte for ſpeaking ſuperſedes the love of reading and reflection. True wiſdom is the child of contemplation. Orators amuſe the vulgar and miſlead them. Orators, when they are only orators, that is, men who, poſſeſſing a flow of words, have acquired by habit an artificial method of laviſhing them on all occaſions, with little meaning, and without ſincerity, are the bane of buſineſs, and the peſts of ſociety. O Britain! if thy ſons had been more active and leſs talkative, thy grandeur would not have been diſgracefully diminiſhed.

The theatrical, declamatory, or ſophiſtical mode of inſtructing the riſing generation in the art of ſpeaking is no leſs hurtful to true eloquence, as an art, and as a matter of taſte, than it would be injurious to the commonwealth, if it were univerſal. The beſt judges acknowledge that eloquence was ruined after it began to be taught by ſophiſts and grammarians in the ſchools. Of ſpeaking, as well as writing, good ſenſe is the ſource. *Sapere eſt principium et fons.* Without knowledge and ſenſe, the fineſt elocution is but as a ſounding braſs and a tinkling cymbal; and diſtant be the day when Engliſhmen, among whom true eloquence has often appeared in defence of liberty, ſhall be led to ſacrifice manly ſenſe to empty ſound, the language of truth and nature to the tricks of ſophiſts and the declamation of ſchoolboy rhetoric, and the tedious yet deluſive traſh of trading politicians.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAP. I.

Of the Interruption which the vulgar Cares of Life give to Poetry and the elegant Pleaſures of Imagination; and of the Contempt thrown upon them by Men of Buſineſs.

Procul, ô procul eſte, profani!

NOTHING contributes more to prove the ſpirituality of man than the exalted delight which he is able to derive from the operations of his intellect or his fancy. The pleaſures of ſenſe have indeed too much ſeductive influence on us all; but we are all ready to acknowledge that they are tranſient and unſatisfactory. The pleaſures of the imagination, on the contrary, encreaſe with indulgence, and give a delight no leſs exalted than pure, and far more permanent than the gratifications of ſenſuality.

The very ſoul is charmed with the creations of a true poet. Viſions of bliſs are excited, and the raptured reader enjoys in fancy all the happineſs of Elyſium. Language embelliſhed with art and

harmony introduces the ideas into the mind with irreſiſtible force, and the reader or compoſer is raiſed, in the hour of retirement, above this orb, to roam in fields of delight.

But his excurſion is but tranſitory. His natural wants, and his ſocial connexions, draw him down again to the earth. Yet the ſoul, conſcious of her kindred to heaven, will ſtill be ſtriving to eſcape, and will eye the golden ſun, like an eagle confined in a cage. God has given it as a privilege to pure minds uncontaminated by intemperance and vice, to eſcape from the body and ſoar to its native climes.

Ambition and avarice, and the neceſſary buſineſs of the world, require ſo much time and attention, that but little is left for the delightful excurſions of the fancy. Indeed the men of buſineſs are ſo warmly attached to their own purſuits and modes of life, that they affect to deſpiſe the pleaſures of poetry as trifling and nonſenſical. O blind and ſtupid! ye rob yourſelves of one of the ſweeteſt alleviations of your toils; the pleaſant paſtime which Providence has allotted man, to brighten his proſpects, and to mitigate his ſorrows. Your ſouls are locked up in the iron cheſts with your guineas, or confined in their flights to the regions of Change Alley and your accompting-

accompting-houſes. If your dull toils are neceſſary as ſociety now exiſts, which I fear I muſt allow, be content with the profits and the honours of them, but do not throw contempt on poeſy, whoſe origin is divine.

The contempt in which poetry is held by the men of buſineſs is eaſily accounted for. They do not underſtand it. They know not its nature; they have never experienced its effects in themſelves, and therefore they are unable to eſtimate its power on the boſoms of others. One thing they clearly ſee, and it gives them a diſlike to it. They ſee that it has no tendency to enrich or aggrandize; and they have heard, or obſerved, that the moſt ingenious poets have been remarkable for indigence. This alone is ſufficient to make them both hate and deſpiſe even a Homer, a Virgil, and a Milton. What nonſenſe to be meaſuring ſyllables, and talking of purling ſtreams, ſhady groves, and moſſy banks, to a man who has no taſte for any thing but newſpapers, and who is conſtantly engaged in contemplating the ſublime ſubject of the conſols, ſcrip, annuities, and lottery tickets! Such an one conſiders himſelf as a Solomon when he compares himſelf with a man of rhymes, as he would call a Dryden and a Pope.

The majority of thoſe who are the ſlaves of covetouſneſs and pride, carry their contempt for poetry and its admirers to the utmoſt extent; yet after all, their contempt indeed falls upon themſelves, for it ariſes from their ignorance.

But many will ſay, that the love of poetry is incompatible with prudence; and it muſt be confeſſed and lamented that a very warm attachment to it is apt, like all other paſſions, to engroſs the attention.

The calls of a wife and children, and indeed of a man's own perſonal wants, are ſo importunate, and at the ſame time ſo juſt, that they muſt be ſatisfied before particular attention can be paid to any mere amuſement. But there are few ſituations in life where buſineſs is ſo urgent as not to allow ſome leiſure. Poetry and the other fine arts are admirably adapted to fill the intervals innocently and pleaſureably.

Let a diſtinction be made between reading and compoſing. They who are from choice or neceſſity engaged in the affairs of the world ſhould be content with reading poetry, and never think of compoſing it. Others whoſe fortunes are eaſy and ſecure, may very honourably obey the impulſe of their genius and inclination in writing verſe.

All

All I mean to contend for is the honour of the art. It has been ſadly degraded by the votaries of Plutus. It is far above any purſuits of which a narrow and mercenary mind is capable. This nation is mercantile, and if wealth is to engroſs honour, what is to become of the arts of whom honour is the nurſe? The arts ſhould be encouraged in a mercantile people, becauſe they open, enlarge, and refine the human mind, ſo as to enable it to enjoy that wealth for which merchandize is inſtituted. Does the accumulation of money and the encreaſe of property always contribute to happineſs and the dignity of human nature? Experience evinces that a man may be ſuperlatively rich, and at the ſame time very mean and very unhappy. It is the improvement of the mind, it is the exaltation of the ideas which, next to religion and morality, tend moſt to human happineſs and perfection.

Let poets therefore be held in high honour. By poets I mean not trivial rhymers and common-place verſifiers, but men to whom nature has given ſuch a degree of ſenſe and ſenſibility as enables them to tranſport their readers with every paſſion or fancy which they mean to excite. Such do not abound. Indeed the firſt rate appear but once in an age, perhaps in many ages. There are, however, in the ſecond rank

considerable numbers at all times, to whom every enlightened and liberal mind will be happy in bestowing honours, as to the improvers and soothers of the human bosom in the soft hour of prosperous leisure, and also in the time of tribulation.

CHAP. II.

Curſory Remarks on ſome of the old Latin Poets, nothing of whoſe Works remain but Fragments. In a Letter.

SIR,

THE Latin claſſics, you know, are divided into four ages, according to a fanciful alluſion to the comparative value of metals; into the golden, the ſilver, the brazen, and the iron age. You deſire me to give you an account of ſome of the earlier writers whoſe names only have ſurvived.

It is not indeed neceſſary to devote much of our attention to thoſe authors whoſe works are loſt; but at the ſame time, as it becomes every polite ſcholar to be acquainted with literary hiſtory, I ſhall briefly communicate to you a few particulars concerning ſome of them, and I wiſh they may be worthy of your attention.

Lucius Livius Andronicus was an epic poet. Diomedes affirms, that he was the firſt who ſuſtained with dignity the *Latian Epos*, and that he wrote a poem, entitled, *Annales Liviani*, which contained the annals of the Roman tranſactions, in eighteen books. He alſo compoſed hymns to the gods, and an Odyſſey, which I apprehend to

have been a play. The following verſes from his hymn to Diana are preſerved, and, conſidering their age, they are well turned:

Et jam purpureo ſuras include cothurno
Baltheus et revocet volucres in pectore ſinus:
Preſſaque jam gravida crepitent tibi terga pharetra
Dirige odorifequos ad certa cubilia † canes.

His fragments, as they are now collected, amount to about one hundred lines.

Cicero and Gellius affirm, that he introduced fable among the Romans. *Apud Romanos primum fabulam docuit.*

Very little is known of this poet, and to add more would only be to revive the fictions of the idle. He who puſhes his enquiries into ſubjects on which there remain no certain documents, invites the deceptions of forgery.

Ennius appears to have poſſeſſed a very conſiderable ſhare of eſteem in the minds of ſome of the beſt judges of antiquity. Scipio Africanus was his friend and patron, in compliment to whom he wrote an heroic poem on the ſecond Punic war. Scipio was ſo well pleaſed with the poet, and thought that his poem had contributed

† The quantity of the firſt ſyllable in *Canis* is altered ſince the time of Lucius Livius Andronicus.

ſo

ſo much to his honour, that he ordered the ſtatue of Ennius to be erected on his tomb as its principal embelliſhment.

Ennius was buried in the tomb, which gave occaſion to theſe verſes of Ovid.

Ennius emeruit, Calabris in montibus ortus,
Contiguus poni, Scipio magne, tibi.

Ovid complimented him alſo in this line.

——Ingenio maximus, arte rudis.

Cicero, in his oration for Muræna, ſpeaks of Ennius in terms of high approbation. Horace's well known lines in the firſt epiſtle of the ſecond book are perhaps not to be underſtood as complimentary.

Ennius et ſapiens, et fortis, et alter Homerus,
Ut critici dicunt ——————

Though I believe ſome readers are of opinion that Horace is ſpeaking his real ſentiments of the old poet in the firſt line; yet the words *ut critici dicunt*, always appeared to me to imply a detraction.

But there can be nothing dubious in the opinion of Lucretius.

Ennius

Ennius ut noſter cecinit, qui primus amæno
Detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam
Per gentes Italas omnium quæ clara clueret.

Virgil, whoſe judgment taught him to add a dignity to his verſes by giving them the ſolemn air of antiquity, not only read and imitated Ennius, but borrowed many lines and phraſes without alteration. It was a bad return, when ſomebody aſked him what he was doing with a book in his hand, to ſay, *ſe aurum in ſterquilinio colligere.* It muſt be acknowledged, that to the refined taſte and ear of Virgil, the rough verſes of Ennius muſt have appeared diſguſtful. In every hundred he might find one which was really beautiful, and which, compared with the ſurrounding maſs, he might denominate a jewel.

Ennius may juſtly be eſteemed the father of the Roman poetry. All that ſpirit and elegance which has ſince charmed the world in the Roman claſſics, may be ſaid to have originated in him. It was the opinion of Joſeph Scaliger that it would be an advantageous purchaſe to redeem the works of Ennius with the entire loſs of Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus, and the later poets.

It is a fine obſervation of Quintilian in which he ſays, that "We view Ennius with ſentiments

"ſimilar

" ſimilar to thoſe with which we venerate a " grove which has acquired an air of ſanctity " from its age, and in which the large old oaks " do not only exhibit an appearance of beauty, " but inſpire a religious awe."

There is a little ſtory of Ennius, which derives more importance from the relater of it, Cicero, than from its own inherent value. Scipio Naſica called upon Ennius, who ordered his ſervant maid to deny him. Scipio knew that Ennius was at home; but however returned contentedly, and without uttering a murmur. Ennius, a few days afterwards, called upon Naſica, who coming himſelf to the door, without opening it, exclaimed, " He was not at home." " Why, " how now," cried Ennius; " I know your " voice, do you think to deceive me ſo?" " I " am aſtoniſhed," replied Naſica, " at your un- " reaſonableneſs. When I called upon you, I " believed your maid when ſhe declared you " were not at home, and will you not believe " me, when I tell you ſo myſelf?"

In his private life he is ſaid to have been remarkable for temperance and frugality. He is recorded to have lived in a little houſe on Mount Aventine, and to have kept but one maid, poſſibly the perſon who denied her maſter to Scipio Naſica.

It

It is ſaid that he ſeriouſly pretended to poſſeſs the ſoul of Homer by means of the Pythagorean tranſmigration. But this was only a poetical viſion. He ſays himſelf,

Mihi viſus Homerus adeſſe poeta.

And Horace ſeems to underſtand the whole as literally a dream.

He was not averſe from the joys of wine; and Horace ſays,

——————Nec unquam niſi potus ad arma
Proſiluit dicenda.

Ennius wrote many books. He poſſeſſed a very fertile genius, and a vehement ſpirit. His words were unpoliſhed, and not ſufficiently elevated above the ſtyle of ordinary converſation. He compoſed *Annales*, and the Wars of the Romans, in twelve books.

His moſt extraordinary work was his *Phagetica*, or the Art of good Eating, in which he deſcribed the moſt agreeable kinds of food, and the places in which they were to be procured. This kind of poem was not without ſeveral models. The ſubject ſeems to have been ſuch as many writers and readers took particular delight in. There had been one celebrated Greek poem on the ſame ſubject, by Archeſtratus.

He

He wrote many tragedies and comedies; but none of his works have deſcended to us in their entire ſtate. There are ſeveral fragments of the *Annales*, from which it is eaſy to collect that Ennius wrote in a very ſpirited ſtyle, and often mixed very fine verſes with his diſcordant compoſition. The firſt line of the *Annales* is remarkably rumbling and ſonorous. It is a great curioſity.

Horrida Romoleûm certamina pango duellûm.

The firſt fragment of the ſecond book begins thus:

———O Romole, Romole, dic o.

There is but one fragment of the *Phagetica*, or *Art of Eating*. He compares the Scarus, for its flavour, to the brains of Jupiter.

———at quid
Scarum præterii, cerebrum Jovi'?

This poem ſeems to reſemble Dr. King's Art of Cookery, written in imitation of the *Ars Poetica* of Horace.

The reſt of his fragments conſiſt of the remains of his epigrams, of his Scipio, his Epicharmus, his Aſotus, his ſatires, and of twenty-ſix tragedies.

Though

Though we cannot collect a complete idea of any one of his works from the fragments, yet they are valuable curiosities, and deserve great care in their preservation. They remind us of the ruins of some great city or temple, and we read them with sentiments in some degree resembling those of the curious traveller while he stalks among the venerable remains of Balbec and Palmyra.

CHAP. III.

Of ſupporting the Dignity of the literary Republic.

ALL human arts are found to flouriſh or decay according to the degree of eſteem or of contempt in which they are held by the general opinion. Poetry, eloquence, and whatever conſtitutes polite literature, cannot exiſt under the chilling influence of neglect. The ſunſhine of favour is neceſſary to expand their bloſſoms and mature their fruit. Excellence in any art requires conſiderable application as well as a natural capacity; but there are few who will apply their abilities with conſtancy to ſuch ſubjects as are attended with no honour, and at the ſame time with little advantage.

It is therefore of conſequence to literature, and to the improvement of the human mind, that the dignity of the literary republic ſhould be ſupported. In that republic, as well as in the political, the brighteſt and moſt laſting luſtre of character muſt be derived from the merit of the conſtituent members; but in both there are extrinſic circumſtances which cannot but occaſion a very powerful influence.

One

One of the moſt injurious events that can happen in the learned ſtate, unlike the civil in this inſtance, is a general diſpoſition in its members to trade with their produce. A mercenary author by profeſſion is not likely to conſider the truth or propriety of things, but to comply with the reigning taſte and principles, in whatever ſubject he adopts for his recommendation. Immorality, infidelity, and falſe taſte in the fine arts will be recommended, even againſt conviction, by him who, with little principle, turns the honourable profeſſion of letters to a craft, and renders its firſt object, not the advancement of learning, but the acquiſition of lucre.

The public, though deceived for a time, will be at laſt diſabuſed; and, finding error and folly propagated by the books it has admired, will loſe much of its regard for books in general, and for univerſal literature. The good authors will be confounded with the bad, and their numbers will in courſe be diminiſhed. They who would otherwiſe have ſhone with luſtre in the ſchools of philoſophy and the arts, will be tempted to ſhun the ſtudies from which no honour redounds, and to join the vulgar throng in the purſuit of gold.

Nam ſi Pieriâ quadrans tibi nullus in umbrâ
Oſtendatur, ames nomen victumque Machæræ
Et vendas, &c.

Venality

Venality has an immediate tendency to impair genius. It draws off its attention from the ſublime and beautiful objects of art and nature, diminiſhes the love of truth and liberty, and confines the mind to the narrow contemplation of profit and loſs, the price of the funds, and the premiums of uſury.

I divide the members of the literary republic into two ſorts, writers and readers; and I venture to affirm, that the excellence of writers depends greatly on the judgment of readers. If the taſte of readers is capricious or erroneous, the popular writer, who aims at applauſe, will be under ſtrong temptations to conform his writings to it in oppoſition to his better judgment. For inſtance, if the rage had continued for that kind of writing which is denominated the SHANDEAN, many men of parts and abilities would have endeavoured to imitate it, though it is confeſſedly irregular and indefenſible by the beſt laws both of right reaſon and ſound criticiſm. If the ſtyle of our Britiſh Oſſian had been univerſally approved, there is little doubt but that our poets would have copied it, though it is not conformable to true taſte, nor to any one of thoſe claſſical models, in the admiration of which the various ages and nations of the world have ſo long been united. Nothing is ſo irregular and anomalous,

but

but it may become faſhionable; and when it is once faſhionable, it will become a model.

The dignity of the republic of letters is much lowered by the publication of many novels, pamphlets, and newſpapers. Newſpapers are not contented to treat on the prevailing topic, the news of the day, and the ſtate of the nation; but they enter into philoſophy, criticiſm, and theology. They do not expreſs themſelves on theſe important ſubjects with diffidence, but determine with that air of ſuperiority which real merit alone can claim, but which ignorance and vanity is apteſt to aſſume. Illiterate readers are eaſily miſled by them. No books can counteract their effects; for where one book is introduced and read, a thouſand newſpapers have had the advantage of a previous peruſal. I do not intend to inſinuate, that the papers are always culpable and deluſive; but, from the frequency of their appearance, and the quantity which they are obliged to furniſh, it will happen that traſh and falſehood will often occupy an ample ſpace in the beſt among them.

If trifling publications conveyed no improper ſentiments and ideas, yet they would ſtill be injurious to letters, becauſe they engroſs that time which would otherwiſe be beſtowed on books of eſtabliſhed

bliſhed character, and ſubjects of inconteſtible importance. Books, as they ceaſe to be wanted, ceaſe alſo to be valued. The majority of readers, in conſequence of their depraved taſte and deficient knowledge, become incapable of forming an adequate idea of works profoundly learned, and eminently well compoſed.

Dictionaries, compilations, and works diſtributed in weekly numbers, being intended ſolely to ſerve the purpoſes of intereſt, often appear in a mean or oſtentatious form, and detract from that reſpect which is due to real knowledge and original compoſitions. They multiply books without adding any thing to the ſtore of ſcience; and this alſo contributes to lower the general value of books and their compilers.

A great quantity of any thing valuable naturally depreciates it. A market overſtocked reduces the price of the commodity. Gold would ſoon loſe its value, if every ſtream reſembled the Tagus or Pactolus. When the diſpenſers of ſcience, wiſdom, and taſte, were but few, they were honoured extravagantly. Others, who may poſſeſs the ſame degree of ſcience, wiſdom, and taſte, will be leſs honoured, becauſe they ſucceed thoſe who were firſt in time, and produced their inventions when books

were multiplied. Vanity, or the love of praiſe, would produce a great number of books; but avarice produces many more. Vanity, however, aims at excellence for the ſake of applauſe; but avarice condeſcends to proſtitution for the ſake of gain. The public is diſtracted with the number of publications, and the ignorant and injudicious often purchaſe at a conſiderable price that which is of no value. In conſequence of frequent diſappointment and injury, they ceaſe to procure books even of allowed merit, and ſit down with a prejudice that the literary republic abounds with fraud.

When this is the caſe, where is the dignity of learning? True merit is confounded with the falſe; and, in conſequence of general contempt, is much diminiſhed.

It is certainly an object of great concern to human happineſs, that good letters and ſolid ſcience ſhould be duly honoured. When they have decayed, not only ſtates have been involved in their decline, but the dignity and welfare of human nature.

It muſt be confeſſed, that one of the moſt obvious and neceſſary means of raiſing the eſtimation of modern literature is to take care that whatever

whatever is offered to the public ſhall have a ſufficient degree of intrinſic merit, to deſerve and to repay its notice. Let none be writers who have not firſt been readers; or, to ſpeak more plainly, who are not qualified by natural abilities and acquired attainments to give pleaſure and information by their compoſition. But who ſhall enforce this law? Human affairs will in many reſpects take their own courſe, and defy controul. And perhaps it would be wrong to reſtrain the efforts of enterprizing poverty, or even to refuſe the pleaſure which attends the indulgence of innocent vanity.

Thoſe writers indeed who, for the ſake of a name or for lucre, publiſh works which militate againſt learning and religion can be excuſed by no apology. They are not only the diſgrace of the literary republic, but of all ſociety, and of the human race.

CHAP. IV.

Of Œconomics, *and particularly as it was conſidered as an Art or Science by the Ancients.*

THAT logic, ethics, phyſic, and metaphyſics, ſhould be exalted to the dignity of arts or ſciences excites no ſurprize; but that the art of managing a houſe and family ſhould be placed on a level with them appears rather wonderful. Yet it is certain that œconomics were taught as a ſcholaſtic ſcience by the ancient philoſophers: and there ſtill remains a very curious book, in which Xenophon has recorded the doctrines of Socrates on the ſubject of œconomy. At firſt ſight, one is apt to imagine that philoſophy has departed from her province when ſhe enters on domeſtic management, and it would appear ridiculous to ſend a houſekeeper or a huſbandman to Socrates for the improvement of good houſewifery or agriculture; yet it muſt be confeſſed, that there is in the work of Xenophon, nothing of impertinence, but a great deal of good ſenſe moſt elegantly expreſſed.

Notwithſtanding the air of ſuperiority which is aſſumed by logic, ethics, phyſics, and metaphyſics, it muſt be confeſſed that, conſidering the

the influence on human happineſs, the greateſt value ſhould be placed on œconomics; for the others, as they are treated in the ſchools, are little more than ſpeculations, and have but a very limited influence either on the regulation or the enjoyment of life.

But the true *paterfamilias*, or maſter of a family, is one of the moſt reſpectable characters in ſociety, and the ſcience which directs his conduct, or reforms his miſtakes, is entitled to peculiar eſteem. Such is that of œconomics; and though it be true that the wiſdom obtained by experience is the leaſt fallible, yet it often coſts ſo dearly, that the intrinſic value ſcarcely compenſates the price. Whatever philoſophy is able to anticipate it, certainly deſerves attention; and there is nothing in which human induſtry and happineſs are greatly converſant which may not be improved by thoſe who conſider it with the diſpaſſionate attention of ſound philoſophy.

Much of the miſery which prevails at preſent in the world is juſtly to be imputed to the want of œconomy. But œconomy is uſually miſunderſtood. It is confined in its meaning to parſimony, though it undoubtedly comprehends every thing which relates to the conduct of a family. Frugality is indeed a very conſiderable part of it;

but not the whole. It is the judicious government of a little community inhabiting one houſe, and uſually allied by all the ſoft bands of affinity and conſanguinity. The perſon who executes ſuch a government ſhould be eminently furniſhed with prudence and benevolence.

The rage for faſhionable levities which has pervaded even the lower ranks, is ſingularly adverſe to the knowledge and the virtues which domeſtic life demands. Dreſs occupies the greater part both of the time and attention of many; and the conſequence is too often ruin in polite life, bankruptcy in the commercial, and miſery and diſgrace in all.

It might be attended with great advantage to the community, and to the happineſs of particular perſons, if ſome part of the time and attention beſtowed on the ornamental parts of education were transferred to thoſe arts which teach the prudent management of domeſtic concerns. The conduct of children in the age of infancy requires conſiderable ſkill as well as tenderneſs, and how ſhould ſhe know how to enter upon it whoſe whole time has been ſpent in learning the polite accompliſhments, which, though they add much to gracefulneſs, make no pretenſions to utility. She muſt be guided by ſervants, nurſes, and medical practitioners; but ſurely it would be

ſafer

ſafer and pleaſanter to poſſeſs ſuch a ſkill as ſhould prevent her from lying entirely at the mercy of ignorance, vanity, officiouſneſs, and preſumption.

As to muſic, which ladies ſpend ſo much time in learning, it is well known that they ſeldom practiſe it when they have entered into the married ſtate. Many other accompliſhments there are which ceaſe to attract attention when once they are engaged in the care of a family. It is therefore probable that the time conſumed in the acquiſition of that which is confeſſedly of no uſe to them, might be employed in acquiring ſuch knowledge as would enable them to contribute greatly to the happineſs of the man to whom they ſhould give their hands and hearts, and of the children which might be the pledges of their love.

I by no means refer them to Xenophon or Socrates for inſtruction in domeſtic management. Their own parents ſhould communicate the reſult of their experience and obſervation on the ſubject. Above all, they ſhould inſpire them with a love of home, and the pleaſures and virtues of a family connection.

Complaints have been made that in the preſent age, marriage is not ſufficiently prevalent, or, at

leaſt, that good huſbands are not numerous. The men who appear to be inſenſible to female charms allege in excuſe for their not ſoliciting ſome lady in marriage, that ſuch are the expenſive manners, dreſs, and amuſements of the faſhionable part of the ſex, and ſo little their ſkill in conducting a family, and ſuch their ignorance of œconomy, that to be married is often to be ruined even in the midſt of affluence.

The viciouſneſs of many among the ſex enables vicious men to gratify their deſires at a ſmall expence. All the meaner part of mankind, of which perhaps conſiſts the greater number, are unwilling to incur the danger of diſſipating their fortunes in ſupporting a woman who can contribute nothing to the alleviation of their cares by prudence and diſcreet œconomy.

In every view it appears moſt clearly, that nothing would contribute more to the happineſs of females, and indeed of men and families in general, than a cultivation of that knowledge which is in hourly requeſt, and without which there can be little permanent ſecurity in the moſt exalted rank and abundant affluence. Socrates judged wiſely therefore in ranking *œconomics* among the moſt uſeful and honourable arts.

CHAP. V.

Of the Appearance of Superſtition in the Character of the late Dr. Johnſon.—A curſory Remark on his Style.

THE greater part of writers who have lately arrived at any very diſtinguiſhed degree of fame have favoured the cauſe of infidelity. It is therefore the more pleaſing to the friend of revelation and of mankind to obſerve one of the moſt popular writers of our own country zealouſly religious. Every one had heard that Dr. Johnſon was devout; but I believe few entertained an adequate idea of his warmth and ſcrupulous regularity in the offices of devotion till the publication of his Prayers and Meditations.

They exhibit the writer in a light in which he has ſeldom appeared to his readers. He uſually puts on a garb of dignity and command. His Rambler is written in the ſtyle of authority. His prefaces to the poets are dictatorial. The reader is eaſily induced to believe that pride is a ſtriking feature in his character. But he no ſooner opens the book of prayers and meditations than he ſees him in a ſtate of true humility. No affectation in the ſtyle. No words of unuſual occurrence.

Every expreſſion is ſuch as is well adapted to a frail mortal, however improved by art or favoured by nature, when he approaches the mercy-ſeat of the Almighty.

The reader is thus in ſome degree gratified by obſerving a man, who had always appeared to him as a ſuperior mortal, and exempt from human infirmities, feeling and acknowledging, with all humility, the common weakneſſes of all human creatures.

It would be the partiality of prejudice to affirm that the volume which I am now conſidering is quite free from all marks of ſuperſtition. To be uneaſy becauſe one has through miſtake drunk a ſpoonful of milk in a cup of tea on a faſt day, argues a mind not entirely under the regulation of right reaſon. To pray for the dead is, I think, at leaſt venial; but I am apprehenſive that it will ſubject him to the charge of ſuperſtition among the ſtrict and ſevere in doctrinal religion.

Upon the whole, though there are many apparent weakneſſes in the volume, which render it a cauſe of wonder and debate and offence among many, yet it does honour to the writer of it, as a proof of remarkable piety. And with reſpect to weakneſſes,

neſſes, alas! what is man but a complication of them? And indeed, who ſhall preſume to determine deciſively that they are weakneſſes? Many of thoſe who cenſure them as ſuch, are probably far leſs capable of judging than Dr. Johnſon, to whom they certainly did not appear in that light.

If he was ſincere, and there is every reaſon to believe it, the moſt ſcrupulous particulars in the performance of his religious duties deſerve a name far more honourable than that of acts of ſuperſtition. Man is a moſt wretched being unaſſiſted by the protection of divine favour; how can it then be wondered that he is ready to attend to the minuteſt circumſtance which, in the hour of diſtreſs, appears likely to ſecure it?

Before we condemn Johnſon, let us examine our own conduct, and conſider whether the confidence in which many of us live, and our neglect of religion, is not a *weakneſs* more deplorable than any thing in what is called the ſuperſtition of this pious man.

While I am ſpeaking of Dr. Johnſon, I cannot refrain from adding an obſervation on his ſtyle. It always appeared to me, and I believe is now generally thought, that he had ſelected Sir Thomas Brown as his model of ſtyle in the compoſition of the Rambler.

I ſelect a few phraſes from the VULGAR ERRORS of Brown in confirmation of my opinion.

" Intellectual acquiſition is but reminiſcential
" evocation."

" We hope it will not be unconſidered that
" we find no conſtant manuduction in this laby-
" rinth."

" For not attaining the deuteroſcopy, they
" are fain to omit the ſuperconſequences, cohe-
" rencies, figures, or tropologies, and are not
" ſome time perſuaded by fire beyond their lite-
" ralities."

" Their individual imperfections being great,
" they are moreover enlarged by their aggrega-
" tion."

" A farraginious concurrence of all condi-
" tions."

" Being divided from truth themſelves, they
" are yet further removed by advenient decep-
" tion."

" Deluding their apprehenſion with ariola-
" tion."

Theſe paſſages I have ſelected, not becauſe they are the moſt ſtriking, but becauſe they firſt occurred.

occurred. A thouſand inſtances of ſimilarity might be produced, if the whole volume were ſearched, and if the limits of my paper would admit them.

Though Brown is an excellent writer, yet it muſt be allowed that he is pedantic; and that he preferred polyſyllabic expreſſions derived from the language of ancient Rome, to his vernacular vocabulary, even in inſtances where it was equally elegant and ſignificant. Had he ſought the fountains of antiquity only when thoſe of his own times were dry, he would have deſerved eſteem for enriching the Engliſh language, and he might have been juſtly held up as an example for imitation; but he appears to uſe ſingular and magnificent words from oſtentatious motives; and what, after all, does the uſe of them prove? that he was acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages, and that he was a learned etymologiſt. Senſible readers are not perſuaded of an author's general learning or ſolid wiſdom by the pomp of his language.

But, notwithſtanding this cenſure, Brown muſt be acknowledged to have contributed much to the *copia verborum*, by introducing words which in his age were uncouth, but which are now become elegant and familiar. Johnſon, conſidered as a lexicographer and improver of the

Engliſh

Engliſh language, did right to ſelect an author who preſented him with a model for coining new words. Perhaps he was led to ſtudy Brown in order to qualify him for the compilation of his lexicon; but, after all, it is certain that his moral writing would have been more extended, and conſequently done more ſervice, had he choſen a ſtyle more ſimple, and leſs obſcured to vulgar readers, by polyſyllabic words of Latin and Greek etymology.

CHAP. VI.

A Ramble of a benevolent Man.

Vir bonus eſt qui prodeſt quibus poteſt, nocet nemini.

SIR,

THE weather was remarkably ſerene, and I reſolved to leave my book room to enjoy the vernal ſeaſon. I walked careleſsly from field to field regaled with the ſweet ſmells which aroſe from the new mown hay, and cheered by every appearance of plenty and tranquillity. External objects have a powerful effect in ſoothing the mind of man. I found myſelf ſympathizing with the appearance of happineſs around me. Every ruder paſſion was lulled to reſt, my heart glowed with benevolence, and I enjoyed for a ſhort time a ſtate of perfect felicity.

As I roamed without any ſettled purpoſe, my feet carried me to the city. Curioſity led me with the crowd into the Seſſions Houſe; and as I had juſt left a beautiful ſcene in which all was peace, I could not but be particularly ſtruck with the contraſt of the preſent noiſe and tumult. I heard two trials, in one of which a wretch was convicted of murder, and in the other

other a cauſe was in debate which appeared to involve great numbers in the crimes of fraud and perjury. The altercation of the pleaders, and the prevarication of the witneſſes, contributed to complete a ſcene by no means adapted to inſpire exalted ideas of human nature.

I haſtily left the place, when, to my mortification, I found that in the very court of juſtice I had been robbed of my watch and handkerchief. While I was lamenting my loſs, and encouraging ſome ſentiments perhaps rather too unfavourable to my ſpecies, I was ſuddenly involved in a crowd, collected with eager curioſity to ſee two hackney coachmen terminate a diſpute by the exertion of their ſtrength in ſingle combat. The parties were nearly equal, and terrible was the conflict. The blows reſounded at a great diſtance, and preſently I beheld them both covered with blood and dirt; ſhocking figures to the imagination. The ſpectators expreſſed no wiſh that the combatants might be ſeparated; but ſeemed delighted when a violent blow took place, and diſappointed when it was ſpent in air. I wiſhed to interfere and promote an amicable adjuſtment of the matter in diſpute; but I found my efforts ineffectual. I ventured to propoſe the ſeparation of the poor creatures who were thus cruelly bruiſing each other, to a jolly butcher, ſix

feet

feet high and three feet broad, but he gave me an indignant look, and threatened to knock me down if I dared to interpoſe. I found indeed that the combat afforded exquiſite pleaſure to the crowd. Some rubbed their hands with glee, ſome ſilently grinned, while others vociferated words of encouragement, and others ſkipped for joy. Great pleaſures are however of no long duration, and this amuſement was terminated by one of the combatants ceaſing to riſe on receiving a violent ſtroke on his left temple. Down he fell, and the ground ſhook under him; and though he attempted three times to riſe, he was unable to effect his purpoſe; and the whole circle agreed that he was as dead as a door nail. The conqueror had only loſt three of his fore teeth and one eye, and all agreed that he had acquitted himſelf like a man. The crowd, which had been ſo much delighted with the fray, no ſooner ſaw it concluded, than with looks of diſappointment they began to diſperſe. I took the opportunity of examining the ſtate of the vanquiſhed party, and found him ſtill alive, though almoſt in need of the means which are uſed by the humane ſociety to accompliſh his complete revival. An officious acquaintance haſtened to his aſſiſtance with a dram of brandy, which contributed greatly to accelerate his recovery. He no ſooner roſe than he poured forth a volley of dreadful

dreadful imprecations on his limbs, which had already ſuffered extremely. Inſtead of thanking me or any of the ſpectators who had endeavoured to reſtore him, he ſwore if we did not ſtand out of his way he would fell us to the ground. We readily gave way, when the hero, putting on his cloaths, walked away, turned down an alley, and was ſeen by us no more.

My reflections on this ſcene were ſuch as tended to the degradation of my ſpecies; and not being in very good ſpirits, I determined to enter a coffee-houſe, and ſeek amuſement by a peruſal of the newſpapers. I ſat down, and happened to caſt my eye over the laſt column, which conſiſted in nothing but narratives of rapes, robberies, and murders. Though I knew that this was not at all uncommon, and that every day's paper of intelligence could furniſh ſomething of a ſimilar hiſtory, yet being in a melancholy mood, I was particularly ſtruck by it; and haſtily laying down the paper, and paying for my diſh of coffee, I put on my hat, and reſolved to walk to my little rural retirement about four miles from this turbulent ſcene.

As I walked along, I could not help calling to mind with ſentiments of extreme regret, the pleaſing ideas with which I had ſet out in the morning,

morning. All was then tranquillity and benevolence. But I had ſeen, in the ſpace of a few hours only, ſuch pictures of human miſery and perverſeneſs, as could not but occaſion uneaſineſs in a mind not utterly deſtitute of ſympathy.

Surely, ſaid I, nature, or the God of nature, never intended that man ſhould be ſo degraded. It is paſſion which deforms the beauty of the moral world; it is wickedneſs and the neglect of religion which renders man more miſerable than the brute, who is happy in his inſenſibility. What then can I think of thoſe writers who argue in defence of immorality, and againſt revelation? What of thoſe governors of the world, who beſtow no attention in preſerving the morals of the common people, and encouraging the teachers of ſuch doctrines as conduce to the raiſing of the reptile man from the voluntary abaſement in which his evil inclinations are able to involve him? Let the magiſtrate, the clergy, the rich and powerful of every occupation, whoſe example is irreſiſtible, exert themſelves in diffuſing virtuous principles and practices among the people at large. Such benevolence, more beneficial than all pecuniary bounty, conſidered only as preventing temporal miſery, cauſes man to approach nearer to his benignant Maker than any other conduct.

conduct. To that Maker, ſaid I, let thoſe who have charity apply themſelves in prayer for the diminution of evil of all kinds, and the extenſion of happineſs and peace.

I was muſing on ſuch ſubjects when I found myſelf at the door of my little cottage. The evening was beautiful. The clouds in the weſt were variegated with colours, ſuch as no pencil has yet been able to imitate. My garden breathed odours, and diſplayed the bloom of ſhrubs, ſuch as might adorn the Elyſian fields of the poets. All conſpired to reſtore the tranquillity of the morning; and when I retired to reſt, my ſpirits being compoſed, I ſoon ſunk into a ſweet ſleep, pleaſingly interrupted in the morning by a dream, which as it appeared to have ſome connexion with the ideas which I had entertained in the day, I ſhall relate.

I thought I was on a large plain covered over with flocks of innumerable ſheep. They appeared to ſtraggle without a guide. Many had their fleeces torn by brambles, ſome were loſt in a barren wilderneſs, others were purſued by wolves, and not a few were conſtantly engaged in annoying each other with their horns. There was a general bleating in a tone expreſſive of great diſtreſs. I pitied the poor creatures, but ſaw no hopes of affording

affording them relief, till I turned my eyes to the eaſtern part of the plain, when I beheld a venerable ſhepherd with his crook inviting the ſheep into a fold, through which ran a delightful ſtream of clear water. Many ruſhed in, and began to drink with avidity. The alteration in their appearance was in the higheſt degree pleaſing. The lambs played about without any fear of the wolf, and the ſheep lay and baſked in the ſunſhine, or ſought refreſhment in the cool ſhade. The ſhepherd's looks were benevolent beyond expreſſion. He made uſe of every intiſement to bring the ſheep into the fold, but many would not hear his voice, and ſome ſeemed to hear it, but perverſely ran away from him. I ſaw thoſe who were ſo unhappy as to refuſe to enter, periſh miſerably by falling from rocks, by famine, by the violence of the wolf, and by diſeaſe. I turned from the painful proſpect to ſee the good ſhepherd and his fold; and I thought at the cloſe of the day he led the ſheep into a green paſture, the verdure and fertility of which was encreaſed by the gentle river which flowed through the middle of it.

I was ſo delighted with the ſcene, that I was going to call out to the ſhepherd in an extacy of joy, when I awoke.

I could

I could not but lament the abſence of ſo pleaſing a viſion; but the avocations and neceſſities of life called me from my bed, which I left with reſolutions of devoting the reſt of my life to the alleviation of evil wherever I ſhould find it, and to the ſecuring of his favour who can lead me from the vale of miſery to the waters of comfort and the fountain of life.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

A CONTEMPLATIVE RAMBLER.

CHAP. VII.

On the Style of Prayer, particularly of Biſhop Andrews's Devotions as publiſhed by Dr. Horne.

"GIVE me," ſaid an antient, "whatever "may be good for me, though I ſhould "neglect to pray for it, and deny me whatever "may be hurtful, though I ſhould ignorantly "make it the object of my ſupplications."

This may be called a laconic prayer. It has always been much admired. The perfect reſignation to the Divine Will which it implies, renders it a model for the imitation of Chriſtian piety.

Our Saviour himſelf ſeems to have diſapproved of long prayers; and the invaluable prayer which he has condeſcended to dictate to erring mortals, is remarkable for its beautiful brevity. It might have been reaſonably ſuppoſed, that the pious compoſers of prayers would have been deſirous of imitating their great Maſter in the conciſeneſs of their petitionary compoſitions. But diffuſion and repetition have been one of their moſt conſpicuous blemiſhes. There is no doubt but that the practice which prevails among ſome reſpectable

able ſects of filling up a long portion of time, in their public ſervice, with extemporary prayer, has contributed greatly to encreaſe the length of prayers beyond the limits both of reaſon and of ſincere and attentive devotion.

The human mind is ſo formed as not to be able to retain any ſentiment in a great degree of fervour during a long time. But prayer without fervour is, I fear, an unacceptable ſervice. And this is the reaſon why brevity in prayer is expreſsly approved by Him to whom prayer is to be offered, and who conſequently muſt know what is moſt agreeable to himſelf, and what ſort of ſervice is the moſt expreſſive of man's ſincerity.

The greater part of the Engliſh liturgy is very juſtly admired, as furniſhing a fine example of ſupplicatory compoſition. The collects are remarkably excellent both for conciſeneſs and fervour of expreſſion. But it may be doubted whether the whole of the ſervice, comprehending three parts, intended at firſt to be ſeparately uſed, is not longer than can be attended to devoutly even by the beſt diſpoſed. The compoſition of moſt of the prayers is ſo well adapted to human wants and infirmities, that it might perhaps ſuperſede the neceſſity of any other prayers,

were it not found that the frequency of their uſe diminiſhes conſiderably the warmth and ſerioufneſs which otherwiſe they are calculated to inſpire.

Books of prayers compoſed for private devotion are therefore very uſeful; and they are certainly not to be examined with great ſeverity of judgment. But there is a little volume, entitled, Devotions of Biſhop Andrews, tranſlated from the Greek by Dean Stanhope, which lately attracted my particular attention, as my expectations were raiſed to an uncommon height by the following paſſage in the preface.

" The heart, already enlightened and inflamed " with piety and charity, will here find ſome- " thing exactly ſuitable to its inward motions, " and the *moſt ſignificant and beautiful words* " wherein to utter its holy deſires, and thoſe gra- " cious ſentiments which, without this help, " would perhaps break forth *with leſs accuracy* " *both of method and expreſſion*. . . . . But the " leſs perfect Chriſtian, who has not yet made ſo " much progreſs in the ſchool of piety as the " former, may reap ſtill greater benefit from " this work. It will tend to improve him in " *knowledge and practice*. . . . . Indeed " what leſs can be expected, when a book of

" this nature is compoſed of materials taken out " of the Holy Scriptures, and very ancient li- " turgies, which bear the names of St. James, " St. Baſil, and St. Chryſoſtom, collected and " put together by the moſt judicious workmen in " this way; ſuch as were the perſons mentioned " in the title page, Dr. Andrews, once Biſhop " of Wincheſter, and Dr. Stanhope, late Dean " of Canterbury."

After reading theſe and other paſſages in the Preface, which are equally ſtrong in the praiſes of this little manual, it will not be thought extraordinary, that I took up the book with great avidity. I admired the pious ſtrain of ſome of it; but I could not help thinking that the valuable parts of it are diſgraced by ſome paſſages almoſt ridiculous. I tranſcribe the following from the cloſe of AN ACT OF FAITH FOR FRIDAY.

" O, deareſt Saviour, impart to me thy whole " ſelf; and let every part and act of thine have " its ſaving influence over me.

" Sanctify me by thy ſpirit, feed and ſtrengthen " me by thy body; ranſom me by thy blood; " *waſh me in thy water*; heal me by thy ſtripes; " *refreſh me by thy ſweat*; hide me in thy " wounds."

I take

I take the liberty of aſking any candid reader whether ſuch petitions are the natural effuſions of ſincere devotion, whether they are not rather of a trifling and whimſical turn, and whether they do not open a door for the ſcorner? *Let us pray with the ſpirit, but let us pray with the underſtanding alſo.*

I know it will be ſaid, that while a form of prayer gives no offence to the ſimple and well-meaning devotee for whom it was chiefly deſigned, it is a matter of little moment whether it pleaſe or diſpleaſe the faſtidious critic and the captious wit. But to this I muſt reply, that it is certainly of importance not to furniſh in any religious compoſition, real occaſion either for cenſure or deriſion; and I might add, that it appears to be an affront to the Majeſty of heaven, to offer up a petition to God in a ſtyle and manner in which we ſhould be aſhamed to addreſs an earthly potentate. A trifling, a quibbling, a nonſenſical prayer can never be the production of a mind warmed with a devotion at once rational and ſincere.

I intend not to cenſure the editor, whom I conſider as one of the beſt ornaments of our church. The blemiſhes of this little book came not from him, I venture to affirm, but from Dean Stanhope, from Biſhop Andrews, or from

ſome older writer. I have no copy of the original, and cannot therefore diſcover whether the above prayer is faithfully tranſlated from it. But I think it cannot proceed from Dr. Horne, whoſe judgment and beautiful ſtyle in the expreſſion of devotional feelings I have often admired.

The language of a prayer ſhould be natural and warm from the heart, yet at the ſame time reſtrained and chaſtiſed by good ſenſe, otherwiſe it muſt degenerate to the nonſenſe of the dotard, or the madneſs of the enthuſiaſt. Dr. Johnſon deſerves great praiſe for the ſimplicity and energy of many of his prayers. Nothing of his uſual ſtyle, his long words, or formal periods, is to be obſerved in them. His good underſtanding ſuggeſted to him the impropriety of all affectation when he laid aſide all pretenſions to wiſdom, and with an humility, which muſt always become the greateſt of mortals, approached the throne of the Almighty.

After all that taſte and criticiſm can ſuggeſt, it is certain that uprightneſs of intention and fervent piety are the beſt beauties of ſupplicatory writings. He to whom prayer is addreſſed conſiders not the form of words, and the ſtructure of periods, but the faith, the ſincerity, the charity

rity of the poor petitioner. If the heart is right, the errors of the underſtanding and of the lips will paſs unnoticed. Yet it is decent and reaſonable to take care, according to the beſt of our knowledge, not to offer up prayers in which there is any known defect unworthy a creature furniſhed by the Creator with thoſe intellectual powers, which ſurely can never be more honourably exerted than in the ſervice of Him who gave them.

" I uſe not to run raſhly into prayer," ſays Howell, " without a trembling precedent medi-
" tation ; and if any odd thoughts intervene and
" grow upon me, I check myſelf and recom-
" mence ; and this is incident to long prayers,
" which are more ſubject to man's weakneſs
" and the devil's malice."

CHAP. VIII.

Of reading Novels and trifling Books without Diſcrimination.

Belli libelli, lepidi, novi libelli. IGNORAMUS.

SIR, *Bath, July* 20, 1786.

AS I came hither to relax myſelf from the fatigues of a profeſſion which requires great application and confinement, I am reſolved to make uſe of all the methods which this ingenious and polite place has invented for the valuable purpoſe of killing time. Accuſtomed to reading as I have always been, I cannot omit books while I ſeek the means of amuſement; but I am forbidden by my phyſician to read any thing but what is called ſummer reading, and therefore I am a frequent lounger at the circulating library. By the way, I beg leave to give you a hint, that if you do not contrive to make your Winter Evenings ſummer reading, they will not be much noticed in the repoſitory of knowledge, where I am now writing you this letter.

As I often ſit and read in the library, I have an opportunity of hearing what books are in the moſt requeſt; and I am frequently not a little diverted with obſerving the great eagerneſs with which

which tomes, totally unknown to me, who have made books the ſtudy of my life, are demanded of the librarian. The firſt queſtion on entering the ſhop I found to be univerſally—Have you any thing new? I ſhould have ſuppoſed that the publications of the laſt year would have deſerved this epithet; but I found by obſervation that ſcarcely any thing is eſteemed new but what is juſt advertiſed, and almoſt wet from the preſs. Curioſity ſeems to be the great ſtimulus of the ſubſcribers; idle curioſity, as I may call it, ſince it ſeems to ſeek its own gratification independently of all deſire of encreaſing the ſtore of knowledge, improving the taſte, or confirming the principles.

I have ſmiled at hearing a lady admire the delicacy of ſentiment which the author of ſome novel, which ſhe had juſt been reading, muſt poſſeſs, though I knew it to be the production of ſome poor hireling, deſtitute of learning and taſte, knowledge of life and manners, and furniſhed with the few ideas he had by reading the novels of a few preceding years. He had inſerted in the title-page, By a Lady, and various conjectures were often hazarded in my hearing concerning the authoreſs. Some hinted that they were acquainted with her, and that it was a lady of quality. Others knew it to be written by an

acquaintance of their own; while all agreed in aſſerting, it muſt be by a lady, the ſentiments were ſo characteriſtically delicate and refined. You may conjecture how much I was diſpoſed to laugh when I knew it to be the production of a comb-maker in Black Boy Alley.

I confeſs I had been much more converſant in a college library than in a circulating one, and could not therefore but be aſtoniſhed at the number of volumes which the ſtudents would devour. The *Helluo Librorum*, or Glutton of Books, was a character well known at the univerſity, and mentioned by the ancients; but I believe their idea of him is far exceeded by many a fair ſubſcriber at the circulating library. I have known a lady read twenty volumes in a week during two or three months ſucceſſively. To be ſure they were not bulky tomes, ſuch as thoſe of which it was predicated that a great book was a great evil. The print in the pages of moſt of them, to ſpeak in the mechanical ſtyle of menſuration, were three inches by one and a half, and the blank paper exceeded the printed in quantity by at leaſt half on a moderate computation.

Now, Sir, I am not one of thoſe who mean auſterely to cenſure this mode of reading; for I am of opinion that it is often very innocent, and

ſometimes

ſometimes not without conſiderable advantage. There are certainly many novels which, though little known in the literary world, are not without merit, and of a very virtuous tendency. Moſt of them tend to recommend benevolence and liberality; for it is the faſhion of the age to affect thoſe qualities; and I really think, as converſation is uſually conducted, ſcarcely ſo many opportunities occur of imbibing benevolent and virtuous ſentiments from it as from the decent books of a circulating library: I ſay decent, for I am ſorry to obſerve, that in the multitude of new books which the librarians are obliged to purchaſe, ſome have a tendency to diffuſe every kind of evil which can miſlead the underſtanding and corrupt the heart.

The danger of indiſcriminately reading whatever has the recommendation of novelty induced me to take up my pen and write to you, hoping that I might ſuggeſt a caution on the ſubject to ſome of your fair readers, who, I am ſure, have recourſe to a circulating library ſolely to improve and amuſe themſelves while under the hair-dreſſer's operation.

They would, I think, do right to enquire the character of every book they read before they take it into their dreſſing room, and ſhew the ſame caution in the choice of their circulating-library books as they would of their company.

Your's, &c. SENEX.

CHAP. IX.

Of Diffidence in Boys.

TO prevent the evil which ariſes from attempting things beyond the ſtrength, nature ſeems to have given many animals that inſtinctive knowledge of their want of ability which produces caution. The bird never leaves the neſt while it is callow, unleſs by an accidental fall; and when its plumage is grown to a conſiderable degree of its perfection, it takes but ſhort flights at a time, and ſeems unwilling to loſe ſight of its parent and nurſe. It is not till the wings have acquired ſtrength and agility that it leaves the branches or the ground, and dares to ſoar undauntedly in the fields of air, unmindful of the neſt and the foſtering feathers which lately ſupplied it with warmth and protection.

Something of a ſimilar diffidence, ariſing from conſcious immaturity of power, appears to me to take place in the human mind at the puerile age; and I cannot help thinking it truly amiable; yet it is ſtigmatized with the odious name of ſhyneſs and ſheepiſhneſs, and many parents appear more ſolicitous to diveſt their children of it, than to furniſh

furniſh them with any grace or accompliſhment. They often ſucceed, by dint of great pains, in thus forcing the roſe bud to expand its immature leaves; but I fear they are greatly miſtaken in their management, and that their uneaſineſs at ſeeing their children diffident is totally miſplaced.

If indeed the diffidence which they lament were likely to continue through life, I agree with them that it would be a great misfortune. It would prevent exertion in a thouſand inſtances where exertion would be rewarded with profit and honour; and it would occaſion the child much cauſeleſs anxiety. But in general there is no danger of its continuance beyond the period of immaturity, at which it is certainly natural, and rather pleaſing and graceful in the eyes of ſenſible obſervers. I contend that it is cauſed by conſcious inability ariſing from youth, and that it will of itſelf give place to a proper confidence on the ſubſequent conſciouſneſs of power matured and confirmed by age.

I believe I may go farther, and aſſert, that this unfaſhionable diffidence which many fathers and mothers labour to remove, even in the tender period of early infancy, is favourable to growth in mental vigour and virtuous principles.

All who are to excel in future muſt devote a previous time to diſcipline. He who would one day ſpeak muſt firſt liſten. And, to return to the bird, to which I have already alluded, it is well known to the ſtudents in ornithology, or at leaſt to thoſe admirers of the feathered race called bird-fanciers, that the fineſt ſinging birds liſten when young to the old ones, and even when they have learned the notes, venture only to *record*, as thoſe gentlemen expreſs it, that is, to ſing in a ſoft low tone, almoſt as if they were aſhamed of being heard. I have often heard the blackbird, who has afterwards made the woods reſound with his melody, trying his ſkill under the covert of a hawthorn, in ſo low a warbling as ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed in the covert of the grove.

The mind collects images of things, and forms opinions during the immature ſtate at which it ſcarcely ventures to employ the tongue in utterance. And when a ſtore of ideas is at laſt accumulated, it feels a ſpontaneous confidence founded on conſcious merit; and ſhines at a mature age with a luſtre which it would never have diſplayed, if, inſtead of collecting ideas, it had been indulging its own pride in uttering vivacious nonſenſe.

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I am of opinion that men of the greateſt genius, of fine imagination and ſenſibility, were of neceſſity timid and diffident in the puerile period; and I wiſh parents not to infer from the diffidence and ſilence of their children that they are naturally ſtupid. There is indeed an appearance of diffidence which ariſes from real dulneſs; but there is a real diffidence cauſed by exceſs of ſenſibility, and it is a favourable preſage of all that is lovely and excellent in human nature. Parents will therefore endeavour to diſcriminate duly before they decide on the abilities of their children from the appearance of timidity or ſhyneſs in company, and diffidence in ſaying or doing any thing which their age has not afforded them opportunities to learn. They will be cautious of removing this veil which nature furniſhes for defect, as ſhe guards the bloſſom before it has acquired ſtrength ſufficient to admit of full expanſion. If the bud, which would naturally expand in April or May, were rudely opened in March, what fruit could juſtly be expected in Auguſt and September?

Nothing is more common than to obſerve parents introducing boys of eight or nine years old into company, to balls, and to aſſemblies, with the profeſſed intention of wearing off that ſheepiſhneſs (for ſuch is the ignominious term) which they

they have unfortunately contracted at ſchool or in the nurſery. Neither is he ſuffered to be ſilent, leſt his friends ſhould attribute ſilence to dulneſs. Contrary to his inclination, the poor boy muſt force himſelf to be pert and loquacious to all whom he encounters, or he will be ridiculed and reproached for ſtupidity. Unfortunate miſtake! If he ſhould become a proficient at this early age in the ſchool of audacity, to what a height of impudence will he arrive in manhood? of impudence unſupported by knowledge, or any real merit which could juſtify even confidence. Too many in this age are trained in this miſtaken plan, which is the reaſon why we commonly meet with pert young men, who overpower all around them with noiſe, who are incapable of rational converſation, who are avoided by all ſenſible perſons, and who aſſociate with the only characters who can enjoy their company, gameſters, horſe-jockies, phaeton-drivers, drunkards, and debauchees. Their miſtaken parents ſucceeded too well in diveſting them at an early age of that diffidence which was natural, which was becoming, and which would have been the means of preſerving their innocence, their characters, their health, their fortune, every thing by which life is embelliſhed, and death rendered leſs formidable to human nature.

CHAP. X.

Of Snugneſs.—Contentment with a Competency, &c.

Vivitur parvo bene.

AMBITION, avarice, folly, reſtleſſneſs of conſtitution, tempt men to launch their little and frail barks into the wide ocean of the world, where great numbers are inſtantly ſhipwrecked, and, of thoſe who eſcape deſtruction, the greater part, after a dangerous and troubleſome voyage, return empty and diſappointed.

It will be ſaid that a ſpirit of enterprize is uſeful to the public, and whatever miſery it may produce to individuals; ſociety, upon the whole, receives ſo much benefit from it, that it ought not to be diſcouraged. This I mean not to deny; and all that I contend for is, to convince thoſe who are furniſhed by Providence with a competency of worldly good, that it is wiſer to ſit down and enjoy it contentedly, than to hazard the loſs of it, and of tranquillity and virtue, in the purſuit of aggrandizement and ſuperfluous encreaſe. There will be always a ſufficient number of needy perſons to ſerve ſociety by the ſpirit of enterprize; and I am by no means convinced

that

that a man of competent fortune, dwelling reſpectably among his neighbours, performing the duties of a Chriſtian, and a good maſter of a family, is not more ſerviceable to ſociety, both by his actual beneficence and his example, than the adventurer who flies to the Indies for the augmentation of a ſtore, which is already more than ſufficient for ſupporting a reſpectable appearance, and furniſhing every real comfort and convenience.

It appears to me that, after the admonitions of every moraliſt, few men form a juſt eſtimate of the duration of human life †, and that their inattention to the obvious truth, that it is ſhort and frail, is the cauſe of their labouring inceſſantly for thoſe things which they cannot have time to enjoy. The few years of extreme old age, if they ſhould ever arrive at it, they reſolve to devote to eaſe and ſelf-enjoyment. And it is true that they might enjoy old age, if their old age ſhould be healthy; but the probability is, that it will be loaded with infirmities, the conſequence of exceſſive anxiety and labour of mind, and perhaps alſo of the ill effects of foreign climates. But it is moſt likely that life will terminate before the

† Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa? Hor.

period

period of contentment ſhall arrive, and that they will drop into the grave in the midſt of their toils and dangers, melancholy monuments of human blindneſs.

Contentment is a virtue more frequently recommended by moral writers of all ages than any other; a proof of its importance, and at the ſame time of the inefficacy of their recommendations of it. I believe it never was leſs practiſed than in the preſent age. It is quite unfaſhionable. A man of parts who does not endeavour to augment his fortune and raiſe his family is eſteemed in the world deſtitute of proper ſpirit. All are therefore on the wing for higher ſtations: Alps on Alps ariſe. No exaltation of rank is high enough. No opulence ſufficiently abundant to ſatisfy the eternal cravings of the man of ſpirit and enterprize.

I fear indeed this eagerneſs is a proof that this world occupies the firſt place in the affections of many, and that the external goods of fortune are deemed by them the only advantages worthy of purſuit. But this is a lamentable inſtance of human error: for even if this world were the whole of man's exiſtence, yet health and contentment are ſtill worth more than the rank of a Marquis,

Marquis, and the poſſeſſions of the richeſt plunderer of the Eaſt.

Theſe reflections were excited by a letter lately received, and with the inſertion of which I ſhall cloſe this evening paper.

SIR,

I BEG leave to lay before you a few circumſtances of my life, which may poſſibly afford ſome hints for the inſtruction of others, under your direction.

I am the younger ſon of a wealthy merchant in London, who, on his deceaſe, left me poſſeſſed of five hundred a year. My brother had at leaſt a thouſand. My friends adviſed me, in order to improve my fortune to an equality with my brother's, to go to the Eaſt Indies, where I had many friends, and a ſingularly fine opportunity of making a rapid encreaſe of my patrimony. I happened, however, to be attached to an amiable young lady, whoſe friends would never conſent to her leaving England; and love was ſtronger than avarice. I abſolutely refuſed to go, notwithſtanding the reproaches which were thrown on my want of ſpirit.

My

My brother, though more amply provided for than myſelf, was of a different diſpoſition; and had no attachments to counteract its influence. On finding me determined, he conſidered with himſelf that the opportunity was too valuable to be loſt, and reſolved inſtantly to accept the great advantages which he ſaid I had ſo raſhly relinquiſhed. He accordingly let his beautiful villa and gardens in a ſweet village near London, and ſet ſail in the firſt Eaſt Indiaman.

I was glad to be delivered from the importunities of my friends, and in a very ſhort time after my brother's departure I married the object of my firſt affections, a lady of little fortune, but of a ſweet and contented diſpoſition. Five hundred a year, though a very pretty income, I knew was not ſufficient to ſupport the expences of faſhionable life in the metropolis; and as we both loved retirement and domeſtic happineſs, we determined to hire a houſe in South Wales.

The houſe was not large, but genteel. It ſtood in the midſt of a little lawn, and upon an eminence which commanded a view of the neighbouring river. There was a good neighbourhood, conſiſting chiefly of genteel families who had retired on ſmall fortunes, with a determination to enjoy themſelves and their friends rather in an

elegant

elegant and comfortable ſtile of viſiting than with oſtentation.

I ſoon found that in this place my five hundred pounds a year gave me great influence. Indeed as the neceſſaries of life were very cheap, and the ſtyle of living frugal, it was an affluent income. I wiſhed not to overbear; but as I found my neighbours inclined to pay me greater reſpect than was conſiſtent with an eaſy intercourſe, I took pains to decline it. I uſed hoſpitality. I took no exceptions to any individual. I diſtributed the fragments from my table to the poor. I never entered into any diſagreements, but as an arbitrator; and in conſequence of this inoffenſive conduct, I was univerſally beloved, and, I muſt confeſs, as happy as I believe the condition of humanity will allow.

Many years paſſed in this retirement; and I never was at a loſs for ſubjects on which I might employ my active powers, and prevent that miſery which ariſes from the want of objects to excite exertion. My family, which conſiſted of my wife, and of three boys and a girl, furniſhed a lively ſcene. I often devoted a conſiderable part of the day to reading with my boys, who were inſtructed in claſſical learning at a neighbouring ſchool, over which a very good ſcholar preſided.

preſided. Rural ſports occupied ſome time, and I never objected to a game at whiſt or quadrille when it was agreeable to the parties whom we viſited. I pretend to no particular modes of living, unleſs to be contented and eaſy, with every reaſon for being ſo, is to be particular.

I often heard from my brother, and in almoſt every letter for ſix years he talked of returning and enjoying his acquiſitions. At laſt he actually returned with an enormous fortune. He paid me a viſit, and quite overpowered us all with the ſplendour of his equipage and retinue. No nobleman in the neighbourhood had ever entered the country with ſo much oſtentation. I could eaſily ſee, though he was not unkind or void of fraternal affection, that he conſidered us as greatly beneath him, mean in our ideas and modes of living, and as not at all calculated to reflect honour upon him in his elevated ſtation. His viſit was but ſhort; and, though we gave him the moſt cordial invitations, was never repeated.

It was not difficult to gain intelligence of his conduct. His profuſion was ſuch, as could not fail to be the ſubject of converſation. There was indeed no extravagance which the higheſt rank of nobility ever indulged which he did not eagerly

gerly adopt, from an idea that it added to the poſſeſſion of wealth the luſtre of gentility.

After a few years ſpent in this ſtyle, he began to find his reſources leſs copious than at his firſt arrival. Creditors were importunate. The ſteward remonſtrated; but pride and vanity had gained too powerful an influence to be reſiſted. He determined to have recourſe to gaming, at once a genteel and eaſy mode of ſupply if he ſhould be ſucceſsful. Unacquainted with the arts of profeſſed gameſters, he ſoon became their prey, and in ſix months was ſo reduced as to be obliged to mortgage his paternal eſtate.

He now began to conſider his ſituation with ſerious ſolicitude. He could not retrench. He could not ſurvive the ſhame of living in a ſtate of poverty or dependance among thoſe whom he uſed to feed with luxury at his table. He was wretched. He could think but of one expedient. He muſt return at the age of five and forty to the Eaſt Indies, under many diſadvantages, to raiſe another fortune.

After a thouſand painful thoughts, he embarked once more to traverſe half the globe, and to live in a moſt unwholeſome climate for the purpoſe of returning at fifty to live the ſame turbulent

bulent and luxurious life in England. Providence ſhortened his labour. He was loſt in the paſſage; and the little property he left in England was afterwards ſold to pay three ſhillings in the pound to a hundred creditors.

I weep over my brother's misfortunes; but at the ſame time I cannot but congratulate myſelf on the choice of my youth. I have enjoyed, and ſtill enjoy, with the bleſſing of a kind Providence, every comfort and convenience which a reaſonable mind can deſire; and I hope others may be led by my example to know when they are well, to be contented with a competency, and to truſt in a benevolent Being, who can cauſe a little ſtore to ſupply more real pleaſure to the contented mind than the fortune of a Clive could beſtow. I often think of Horace's—

——Quod petis hic eſt,
Eſt Ulubris, animus ſi te non deficit æquus,
Vitæ ſumma brevis, ſpes vetat nos inchoare longas.

But I ceaſe quotation. One effect of my retirement is, that I have accumulated many apophthegms and adages of ancient wiſdom; and of moſt of them I have experienced the truth. For the preſent adieu.

OFELLUS.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Elevation of Sentiment and Character as neceſſary to Magiſtrates who wiſh to be efficient and reſpectable.

THE condition of human nature is ſo frail that it may almoſt appear ridiculous in any man oſtentatiouſly to aſſume the appearance of grandeur and dignity. Yet there are perſons who ſeem to poſſeſs a native weight which adds to their words authority, and to their actions force.

This endowment, whatever it is, is intended by Providence for the communication of good and the prevention of evil. Thoſe who poſſeſs it ſeem to have a natural claim to command, to civil pre-eminence, to the honourable and important offices of the magiſtrate and the legiſlator.

But in the confuſion of the preſent ſcene, riches uſurp the authority which nature intended for her favourites; and it is common to obſerve perſons inveſted with civil and official importance, whoſe natural inſignificancy expoſes their perſons to contempt, and renders their office ineffectual.

effectual. A Lord Mayor of London, for inſtance, raiſed from a low origin by fortunate events in trade, deſtitute of education and natural dignity, degrades at once the office and himſelf by the advancement, of which he was ambitious. He becomes more conſpicuous by elevation; and the meanneſs which would paſs unnoticed, or might even be palliated in his natural ſtation, becomes, when he is inveſted with the gold chain and the ſcarlet robe, a ſolemn mockery of magiſtracy.

Much of the contumacy of the common people has, I think, ariſen from the want of perſonal authority in the magiſtrates. In ignorant ages the mere robes and inſignia of office might command reſpect; but in times when, if few are profoundly, yet all are ſuperficially learned, much more is required to ſecure a voluntary deference than the exaction of it by force, or the inviting of it by oſtentation.

To ſecure reſpect, a mind muſt be viſible; a mind furniſhed with knowledge and enlarged with liberality. Without diſintereſtedneſs no public character, however remarkably diſtinguiſhed by talents, natural or acquired, can be long illuſtrious. Opinion or eſteem is the foundation

of authority; but how is opinion or eſteem to be conciliated in favour of a man who has bought his nominal honours, and knows not to act, to ſpeak, or to think conſiſtently with the elevated place to which his vanity has aſpired?

If vanity did not uſually cloſe the ear to the voice of advice, I would venture to whiſper to every candidate for public honours, that he will probably derive no real credit from them if he is conſcious that he has not enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education. He may be very reſpectable as an honeſt man, and a good maſter of a family, in private life, but in public he muſt be contemptible without an elevation of ſentiment correſponding with the elevation of his rank. I own that in ſome inſtances this elevation is viſible where education has been defective. Strong parts and a long commerce in the world have ſupplied the defect; but theſe inſtances are not ſo common as to juſtify the generality of uneducated rich men in ſuppoſing that they are furniſhed by nature with talents, knowledge, and authority ſufficient to qualify them for rule, for offices of public dignity and importance.

Theſe reflections were ſuggeſted by the following letter.

SIR,

SIR,

I AM a foreigner who have ſpent a year or two in England, ſolely for the purpoſe of improving myſelf in a nation which is reſpected throughout Europe, as exhibiting a ſtate of improvement and a generoſity of ſentiment which reflects honour on human nature.

When I came to London I was ambitious of being introduced to the acquaintance of thoſe whom I was told were the principal magiſtrates, one of whom annually reſided in the magnificent manſion of magiſtracy, and rode, as I often ſaw, with triumphal pomp in a gilded vehicle, through the ſtreets of London. I found it by no means difficult to be introduced to a public feaſt, where I endeavoured to form an intimacy with the chief magiſtrate. I ſucceeded ſo far as to be invited to a private dinner with him, and a few of his brother aldermen, and members of the common council.

The entertainment was ſumptuous and genteel. But converſation was my object, and I ſpared no pains to lead to ſuch ſubjects as I thought might afford me the moſt valuable information. I mentioned ſeveral of thoſe topics connected with Engliſh hiſtory in which I had read that the city of London had a principal ſhare; but my

remarks cauſed only a vacant ſtare, and received no other reply than ſuch as—" I do not know, " Sir—I really forget, Sir—Give me leave to " help you to a ſlice of ham, Sir." I thought my converſation might be ill-timed, and therefore ſaid no more on the ſubject of hiſtory, but joined in the general topics of the day. Pardon me, Sir, but I could not help bluſhing for two or three gentlemen in gold chains who expreſſed themſelves ungrammatically and vulgarly on the commoneſt ſubjects. I am a foreigner, and therefore muſt not pretend to be a critic in your language and pronunciation; but I appeal to you whether—" Them things—This here weal—My " vife"—are reconcileable either to grammar or the elegance of polite converſation.

I ought not to be cenſorious, nor am I diſpoſed to deride; but I cannot help obſerving, that the magiſtrates appeared from the general turn of converſation to be far leſs well informed and leſs liberally minded than their ſtations require. If the merchants and gentlemen of the metropolis are not better accompliſhed than the magiſtrates of my acquaintance, I own I ſhall loſe ſomething of that reſpect for your nation which I entertained while I was at home.

I intend to write my travels; and if I were to give an accurate account of thoſe of your princi-

pal

pal perſons in the corporation of London with whom I have aſſociated, I fear I ſhould affront a people to whom I owe gratitude. The dignified magiſtrates of the firſt city in the univerſe would appear to be on a level with the Bourgeois. I dare ſay, and indeed am well informed, that there are members of the court who are polite and well-informed gentlemen; but that too often pragmatical perſons offer themſelves for the ſcarlet robe who ought to be contented with the leathern apron. I endeavour to view things as a philoſopher and coſmopolite, and I cannot but think that the degradation of the magiſtracy muſt be injurious to the police, the morals and the liberty of your country. Pardon my freedom, and believe me,

Your's, &c.

A SWISS.

CHAP. XII.

Miſcellaneous Literature.

§ 1. MR. Huet cenſures Virgil for an overſight in the following beautiful deſcription of the Nightingale bereaved of her young:

Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela *ſub umbra*
Amiſſos queritur fœtus; quos durus arator
Obſervans nido implumes detraxit; at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque ſedens miſerabile carmen
Integrat & mœſtis latè loca queſtibus implet.
Georg. iv. 511.

The poet makes the Nightingale ſing under the *ſhade* of a poplar, and then tells us that ſhe ſung in the night. *Flet noctem.* "How," ſays Mr. Huet, "can the night and the ſhade of the "poplar be reconciled?"

If this were an overſight, the charming plaintiveneſs of the paſſage would redeem it from ſevere cenſure. But might it not be a moonlight night? and might not *umbra* ſignify the gloom where the moonſhine was intercepted by the foliage of the poplar?

§ 2.

§ 2. Mr. Heyne defends Virgil in another, and perhaps in a better manner. " Huetii et " Caſtelvetri reprehenſiones hujus loci, uti *um-* " *bræ populeæ* cum tamen ſequatur, *flet noctem*, " ab ignorantiâ poeticæ cum rationis et artis " tum orationis profectæ ſunt ; umbra tam pro- " prium et perpetuum eſt arboris attributum, ut " ad cauſas phyſicas ac tempora, reſpectus planè " non habeatur."

Virgil is thought by the ſame critic to have had in view the elegant ſimilitude in the Idyllia of Moſchus. 4 Idyl. ver. 21.

Ως δε τ' οδυρεται ορνις επι σφετεροισι νεοσσοις
Ολλυμενοις, 'ουστ' αινος οφις ετι νηπιαχοντας,
Θαμνοις εν πυκινοισι κατεδιει· η δε κατ' αυτους
Πωταται κλαζουσα μαλα λιγυ ποτνια μητηρ
Ουδ' αρ' εχει τεκνοισιν επαρκεσαι· η γαρ οι αυτη
Ασσον ιμεν μεγα ταρβος αμειλικτοιο πελωρου†.

La Cerda, who is copious as uſual in quoting both Greek and Latin paralleliſms to this place,

† Verum et queritur avicula ob ſuos pullos
Pereuntes, quos ſævus anguis adhuc parvulos
In denſis arbuſtis devorat; ipſa vero circum ipſos
Volat ſtridens admodum acutâ voce pia mater
Neque ſanè poteſt filiis opem ferre ; nam et ipſa
Valde metuit accedere ad immite monſtrum.

has omitted this from Moſchus. "Virgil," ſays Mr. Pennant, "ſeems to be the only poet among "the ancients who has attended to the circum-"ſtance of this bird's ſinging in the night-time. "They muſt have been very inobſervant; but "the truth is, the poets, according to their "manner, dignify any bird which ſings plea-"ſingly with the name of the Nightingale."

§ 3. It has been remarked, that in many inſtances poets are inaccurate hiſtorians of nature. They endeavour chiefly to pleaſe; which purpoſe can be effected by beautiful language and imagery, without any ſtrict regard to truth of repreſentation. Some very eminent poet, if I miſtake not, makes the gudgeon riſe at a fly, whereas every angler in the ſchool of Walton knows that gudgeons feed at the bottom, and ſcarcely ever were known to emerge above the ſurface in purſuit of the winged inſect. But the gudgeon ſtands for any fiſh, *more poetico*.

Mr. Gray, a philoſopher as well as poet, has, I believe, made a little miſtake in the firſt ſtanza of his fine deſcriptive Elegy, from not attending to a cuſtom in the rural œconomy of this country.

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkneſs and to me.

If

If he meant that the ploughman leaves his plough at the tolling of the curfew, or at the approach of darkneſs, he has fallen into an error; for the ploughman leaves his work at three o'clock in the afternoon in all the counties in which I have had opportunities of making remarks on the *coſtumi* of agriculture. But perhaps it is not ſo univerſally; though I ſhould imagine the practice of leaving off ſo early ariſes from an experience that to plough from ſix o'clock to three is a ſufficient day's work both for man and beaſt. But I hate hypercriticiſm; and perhaps Mr. Gray meant, *more poetico*, as I have ſaid before, by the ploughman any ruſtic labourer. But whether it be ſo or not, he muſt be a faſtidious reader who is hurt by the trifling miſrepreſentation amidſt ſo finely coloured paintings; yet, as Horace ſays, "*ficta* VOLUPTATIS cauſâ ſint proxima veris," it is right to preſerve truth of repreſentation even in poetry, where the ſacrifice of it is not attended with peculiar advantage to the prime purpoſe of the poet, *prodeſſe delectando*.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Practice of printing emphatic Words in Italics or Capitals.—Utility of it—if not affected and exceſſive.

IT is the practice of many writers to mark with Italics thoſe words which they wiſh to be particularly noticed by their readers; but they have been cenſured for it by ſome who ſeem to think it an affront to the reader's underſtanding. The practice has been, like moſt others, carried to a ridiculous exceſs; for when almoſt every word is ſcored, diſtinction is nearly as much deſtroyed as if none had been marked with a note of variety.

But I conſider the change of character, when an emphatic word is to be marked, a very convenient and efficacious mode of accentuation. There are no accents appropriated to the purpoſe of emphaſis in the Engliſh language, and therefore Italics and Capitals have been uſed to ſupply the defect, and have done it with great advantage.

Theſe marks of diſtinction, as I have hinted before, in order to retain their uſe, muſt never be

be applied but when greatly requiſite, otherwiſe they confound words and paſſages of little force and moment with thoſe which are truly energetic.

The reader will on moſt occaſions ſupply the proper accent, and mark the emphaſis by the exerciſe of his own ſagacity. But yet there are paſſages in the beſt authors where the reaſons for emphaſis on different words are ſo evenly balanced, that the reader is at a loſs to know which ſcale preponderates; and different readers, placing accents in different places, underſtand whole ſentences differently. The modern practice of printing the leading words in Italics at once decides and prevents equivocation.

The writing of words, on which the argument depends, or which are worthy of remark either for force or beauty, in capitals, has the effect not only of marking the emphaſis, but alſo of rouſing the reader's attention to that which the writer thinks neceſſary to be attended to in effecting conviction, or in elucidation.

The ancient mode of writing was remarkably deficient in *diſtinction*. It often made no ſeparation of ſections, chapters, paragraphs; often

none between words, as appears from the inſcriptions on ancient marbles.

As therefore the diviſion of works into chapters and paragraphs is a very great improvement, rendering books pleaſanter, more intelligible, and more eaſily retained in memory, ſo alſo the recent practice of printing words in italics or capitals, *diſtinctionis aut emphaſis gratiâ*, is to be conſidered as a farther ſtep to improvement, as rendering books more luminous, and conſequently more agreeable and uſeful.

The late author of Hermes carried the practice to an exceſs bordering on an affectation ſimilar to that of Sterne—in his—daſhes—which are proper enough to mark an apoſiopeſis, or a natural pauſe, but loſe all effect when they occur too frequently, and without neceſſity.

CHAP. XIV.

Of living after a Model, fixing upon ſome good Man to imitate in our Conduct, Behaviour, Studies, Converſation; an eaſy and probable Way of arriving at Wiſdom.

MANY of the rules of rhetoricians contribute little to the improvement of the orator, and ſerve only to diſplay the profeſſor's ſubtilty. But the advice which they give on the ſubject of imitation is truly valuable, as it conduces immediately to facilitate practice. They adviſe their ſcholars, after the preparatory learning is acquired, to chuſe a model of ſtyle, according to which they may ſhape their own; and not only the beſt writers and orators, but alſo the beſt painters, ſculptors, and architects, have found it the eaſieſt and moſt infallible mode of acquiring what the Greeks call ἕξιν, or an habitual eaſe in the practice of their arts, to follow the footſteps of ſome excellent predeceſſor.

The art of life may derive advantage from rules intended only to facilitate the acquiſition or practice of the humbler arts, which adminiſter to pleaſure, to pride, or to convenience. Let him

him who would live well, like him who wiſhes to write well, chuſe a model, whom he may imitate with a judicious and diſcriminating, not with a blind and ſervile, imitation.

A caution is neceſſary, leſt the imitation recommended ſhould become an odious ſpecies of affected reſemblance, leſt it ſhould be ſo cloſe as to deſtroy all originality, and leſt it ſhould degenerate to an apiſh mimicry.

Simia quàm ſimilis, turpiſſima beſtia, nobis!

ENNIUS.

Such an imitation muſt be contemptible. Seneca gives a good idea of the ſort of reſemblance to be ſought, when he ſays, "the imitator of a ſtyle ſhould endeavour to be like the original, not with the ſame exactneſs as a picture is like the perſon repreſented, but as a child reſembles the features of its parent." *Similem eſſe te volo, quomodo filium, non quomodo imaginem.*

The firſt care is to ſelect a proper perſon for a pattern, and then to diſcriminate between the qualities in his character which are ſuited to our genius, ſituation, rank in life, and profeſſion, and thoſe which, however admirable in him, would be ill-placed and ridiculous in us. Without

out this attention, we ſhall fall into the error of thoſe whom

Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile;

we ſhall be affected, and loſe our native character, without gaining an adſcititious one of equal value.

A judicious man will naturally ſelect ſome perſon in the ſame profeſſion or employment, of ſimilar views, and of eminence in the particular walk of life into which himſelf has entered.

A clergyman, for inſtance, it is moſt probable, and commonly moſt expedient, will imitate a clergyman; a lawyer, a lawyer; a phyſician, a phyſician; and ſo in all other departments of life.

The character which forms the model may be either living or dead. There are many lives of men in all profeſſions written with accuracy, and with a minute detail of particular circumſtances. They may be often better known, and more eaſily imitated, than living characters, eſpecially by young men, who cannot be much acquainted with the world, at leaſt with eminent perſons, in a degree ſufficient to know all the requiſite circumſtances concerning them.

I will

I will deſcend to particulars. Suppoſe the young man in orders, and that he fixes upon ſome eminent character, by which to regulate his private life and his parochial conduct. Suppoſe that perſon to be Biſhop Wilſon or Dr. Hammond, or any others of thoſe many honourable members of the church *whoſe bodies are buried in peace, but whoſe names live for evermore.*

In every ſituation of life which appears parallel to theirs, he will aſk himſelf how they would have acted, and he will find an anſwer by obſerving how they really did act. Two or three ſuch models will furniſh precedents which, with a little adaptation to modern times, will afford a directory for all conduct. Judgment is certainly neceſſary; and I have already ſaid that a blind imitation of any model whatever is not to be approved.

Some have recommended not only the imitation of a perſon of excellent character, but the habit of ſuppoſing him always preſent, ſeeing and hearing us on all occaſions. We may thus make him our privy counſellor, aſk ourſelves what he would ſay on ſuch a point, what advice he would give, and whether we ſhould be aſhamed to act as our inclination prompts us in his real preſence. Thus he becomes *vitæ dux, et morum magiſter.*

What

What I have ſaid of a clergyman's chuſing a model may be applied to all other profeſſions, and indeed to all occupations, from the king to the mechanic. A good model once choſen will aſſiſt them all in the journey, as a hand poſt directs the traveller on a wide waſte or foreſt, or as the lamp from the beacon guides the mariner on the ocean. They muſt ſtill uſe their own judgment, and exert their own efforts, or they may loſe their way even in full view of the light-houſe.

Civil hiſtory has always been extolled as the great teacher of wiſdom. But its leſſons are chiefly political, and kings and ſtateſmen are principally concerned in them. Biography is the ſpecies of hiſtory beſt adapted to teach wiſdom in private life. There are many lives of Engliſh worthies which cannot be attentively read by an ingenuous young man without exciting an ardour of virtue.

But living models may be alſo very advantageouſly ſelected by the aſpirant after excellence. The danger is leſt the choice ſhould fall on a wrong character. Splendour of rank, riches, honours, ſtation, are too apt to recommend patterns which exhibit only a vitious exemplar, whitened and gilded by the hand of faſhion. Envy and prejudice are alſo prone to add deformity

formity to characters really beautiful. So that the choice of living examples is more difficult than that of the departed.

But, ſo long as a good model is choſen, there is little doubt but that the means of arriving at excellence will be facilitated, whether the choice fall on the living, or on thoſe who are out of the reach of envy.

The precept of Quintilian in the art of rhetoric muſt be obſerved in life. *Diu non niſi optimus quiſque, et qui credentem ſibi minimè fallat, legendus eſt.*

But let not the imitation even of the beſt authors or the beſt men become a plagiariſm either in writing or in life.

CHAP. XV.

A Sunday Exhortation to Scholars—ſuppoſed to be addreſſed to them by a Preceptor.

"I AM truly ſenſible of the important truſt repoſed in me, and cannot but feel a ſolicitude to diſcharge it with propriety. I will not ſay that the pecuniary emolument ariſing from it is by any means indifferent to me. No man would ſacrifice his eaſe and enter into an anxious employment, without a deſire of thoſe rewards which are allotted to induſtry. And it is equitable that he who is willing to ſtep forward and render himſelf extenſively uſeful to others ſhould derive ſuch advantages from his exertions as may render his old age eaſy and reſpected, or provide for the wants of a riſing family. But I muſt declare, on the other hand, that the ſatisfaction proceeding from a conſciouſneſs of performing the duty incumbent on me, and rendering a ſervice equivalent to the recompence, ſweetens every labour, and gives additional value to the pecuniary compenſation.

"You are placed here for two purpoſes; the improvement of the underſtanding, and the formation

ation of virtuous principles for the guidance of your moral conduct.

" Improvement of the underſtanding is apparently the firſt object in your entrance at ſchool; but it cannot be doubted but that improvement of the heart is really eſteemed by thoſe to whom you are moſt dear, at a higher price than the fineſt accompliſhment of the moſt cultivated intellect.

" It is your buſineſs to unite theſe eſtimable objects, and to ſuffer your hearts and underſtandings to vie with each other in the purſuit of excellence.

" Of theſe lectures which I have inſtituted as a laudable method of employing a Sunday evening, the principal purpoſe is to promote the knowledge and the practice of the Chriſtian religion; and in the performance of this purpoſe, I ſhall of neceſſity be led to recommend the pureſt ſyſtem of morality. Ethics, improved and exalted by the Chriſtian religion, become the guides to real wiſdom and ſolid happineſs, to which they could never attain when taught only in the ſchools of heathen philoſophy.

" In

"In the religious part of your education, it is not expected that you ſhould be engaged in the profound diſquiſitions of theology. The plain doctrines of the religion which you have been taught to profeſs muſt be explained to you; but the principal buſineſs is to open your hearts for the reception of thoſe ſentiments and precepts which conduce to the direction of your actions in the employments and engagements of your ſubſequent life.

"In the firſt place, I muſt then remind you of the neceſſity of reading the Scriptures; that is, of drinking the ſacred waters at the fountain.

"But to read the Scriptures with advantage, judgment is neceſſary; and as judgment at your age is not mature, you muſt ſeek and follow the directions of your inſtructors. At your age the plaineſt and moſt perſpicuous paſſages will beſt deſerve and reward your attention. The hiſtorical parts of the Old Teſtament will entertain you, if you conſider them only in a claſſical view, as valuable paſſages of ancient hiſtory; but I chiefly refer you to the books which more immediately conduce to moral inſtruction, ſuch as the Proverbs, the Book of Eccleſiaſtes, the Wiſdom of the Son of Sirach, and the admirable

Book

Book entitled Eccleſiaſticus. I muſt indeed lament that this fine remain of ancient wiſdom is not inſerted in the common editions of the Bible.

"The prophetical books will not at preſent afford you much inſtruction; becauſe they cannot be underſtood without a larger ſhare of preparatory learning than you can be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs at your age. But I adviſe you to read ſeveral of them for the poetical beauties which they confeſſedly diſplay. Iſaiah abounds with ſuch beauties, and Jeremiah is by no means deficient in them. Many of you have read Mr. Pope's Meſſiah, and could not but have obſerved that ſome of its moſt pleaſing beauties were taken from Iſaiah. The learned Dr. Lowth has diſplayed, with great accuracy and taſte, the beauties of ſacred poetry in the lectures which he read as Profeſſor of Poetry in the Univerſity of Oxford.

"If you read the Old Teſtament with a taſte for its beauties, you will accompliſh two important purpoſes at the ſame time. You will acquire a knowledge of the Holy Bible, which is your duty; and you will improve your taſte and judgment, which is your buſineſs as ſtudents in the courſe of a polite education.

"The

"The New Teſtament requires the peculiar attention of every one who profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian. But here alſo judgment is neceſſary to direct the ſtudent in the mode of his ſtudy. To one who has not the requiſite ſhare of introductory knowledge, the Goſpel will appear to contain many difficulties. As you cannot yet engage in theological ſtudies, I muſt recommend it to you to take up the Teſtament with that humility which becomes all human creatures, but more particularly perſons ſo young as you are, and ſo deſtitute of all that knowledge which can enable you to form a deciſive opinion in divinity. You will do right to pay particular attention to the ſermon on the mount, and to that admirable epitome of all moral philoſophy, the rule of doing to others as we wiſh them to do to us. If you pay due obedience to this precept, you will never heſitate in determining what part you ſhall act whenever difficulties occur.

"It will however be proper that you ſhould at an early age familiarize to your mind the language of the Scriptures, in all their parts, though you ſhould not be able fully to comprehend it. You will thus treaſure up many uſeful paſſages in your memory, which, on many occaſions in the courſe of your lives, may be uſeful. A very early acquaintance with the words of the Old and

New

New Teſtament, even before any adequate ideas of their meaning have been obtained, has been found uſeful in ſubſequent life to the profeſſed divine.

" And here I cannot but animadvert on the prevalent neglect of the Holy Scriptures, a neglect which too plainly indicates a faint belief in the doctrines which they contain, and which ought to animate every parent and inſtructor in the buſineſs of infuſing religious ſentiments and a reverence for the Scriptures while the mind is moſt ſuſceptible of deep impreſſions. You, who conſtitute a part of the riſing generation, will exert yourſelves in removing an evil which menaces the ruin of the national morals and proſperity. They indeed who are capable of a ſentiment ſo enlarged as this exhibit a manlineſs of mind, which is the more honourable to them as it is uncommon at their age.

" In the religious part of your education it would be a diſgraceful omiſſion to neglect the catechiſm. The catechiſm of the Church of England is conciſe, yet, as a catechiſm, ſufficiently inſtructive. It is plain and unadorned, and for that reaſon the more excellent. I know it has enemies, who complain that it is too ſhort, and that it teaches doctrines which they

do not admit or underſtand. I recommend it to you as a uſeful, though humble guide, and I wiſh to warn you againſt *that pride of heart* which induces ſome perſons to ſlight it, and from that ſpirit of cenſoriouſneſs, which cauſes in others a diſlike of all that contradicts their own peculiar perſuaſion. Be ready to receive valuable inſtruction from whatever party or ſect it may proceed; but, unleſs there is ſome real and ſolid objection to the mode in which your fathers have been inſtructed, I wiſh you to adhere to it with a dutiful veneration.

"Archbiſhop Secker's lectures on the catechiſm are very uſeful explanations. They are plain in the ſtyle, and purpoſely adapted to the underſtandings of the ſimple. You will not inſpect them for the graces of language, or the figures of rhetoric, but for information in the principles of Chriſtianity.

"From the Scriptures themſelves, the catechiſm, and Secker's lectures, you will derive as much knowledge in the department of religion as you can reaſonably be expected to acquire at your ſchool. Let theſe conſtitute a foundation, on which you will be conſtantly making ſome addition, either theoretical or practical, during the future courſe of your lives.

"But all this will avail but little, unleſs you add your prayers and praiſes. Make it then a rule never to be violated, to pray night and morning. It is indeed true that in this and other ſchools it is uſual to read prayers at the commencement and at the cloſe of the day; but, I am ſorry to ſay, that theſe are often conſidered as mere formalities. You will pay attention to theſe, and you will alſo repeat other prayers at lying down on your pillow or riſing from it.

"You will in vain expect ſucceſs in your ſtudies unleſs you implore a bleſſing on them from heaven: or if you ſhould be permitted by Providence to make a proficiency in knowledge for the ſake of others, you will not derive from your acquiſition that degree of happineſs which you would otherwiſe enjoy. You muſt aſk the Giver of every good gift for that moſt valuable gift of literary improvement.

"You are apt at your age to be thoughtleſs. You enjoy health and ſpirits. You are ſtrangers to the cares of the world. Cheerfulneſs indeed becomes you; but let me prevail with you when I entreat you to conſider the value of time, and the importance of making a good uſe of it.

"Conſider

"Conſider your parents. Form an idea of the anxiety which they feel on your account. You muſt have obſerved how eagerly they wiſh for your improvement. They feel a laudable ambition which prompts them to deſire that you may arrive at eminence in whatever profeſſion or employment you may hereafter be engaged by Providence. To them it would be a painful ſight to ſee you contemptible and unſucceſsful. But nothing can vindicate you from contempt, or inſure your ſucceſs ſo effectually as perſonal merit, or the qualities of a good diſpoſition, adorned with a competent ſhare of human learning and accompliſhments.

"Your parents do all that lies in their power to promote your improvement; but, after all, they cannot but know that it remains with yourſelves to give efficacy and final good ſucceſs to their endeavours. The mind is not like a veſſel into which may be poured any quantity of whatever the poſſeſſor chuſes to infuſe. It is rather like a plant which, by the operation of its own internal powers, imbibes the nutriment afforded by the earth.

"But, not to dwell on ſimilies, it is certain that your inſtructors can ſerve you only in conjunction with your own efforts.

"Let me then entreat you to exert yourſelves if you have any regard for your parents, whoſe happineſs entirely depends on your conduct; if you have any regard for your own honour, ſucceſs, and comfort; if you hope to be uſeful and reſpected in ſociety."

CHAP. XVI.

Of ſome ſelf-created Miſeries.

SIR,

UNDER a feigned name, or anonymouſly, I can divulge without a bluſh ſome errors and misfortunes which I ſhould not chuſe to acknowledge in my own perſon, leſt my friends ſhould deride me.

From the information of my looking-glaſs, and the praiſes of my friends, I was led to conclude at a very early age that I was beautiful. As it is natural to pay the firſt attention to that on which we chiefly value ourſelves, I devoted much time and care to the contemplation and improvement of my face. The ſmalleſt pimple or redneſs gave me great uneaſineſs; but there was one blemiſh which almoſt broke my heart. One of my fore-teeth grew irregularly, and had at one corner the appearance of decay. This alone I imagined ſufficient to counterbalance the effect of all my other graces. But as I read the pretenſions of dentiſts in their advertiſements, my mortification did not yet terminate in deſpair.

I applied to an operator, who confidently aſſured me that he could replace my tooth, by an

art known only to himſelf, in ſuch a poſition as to render my rows of ivory and pearls, as he was pleaſed to call them, perfectly unparalelled. I ſubmitted to his hand, and he twiſted a wire round my teeth, which for ſix weeks gave me exquiſite torment; but the hope of removing the blemiſh afforded me ſolace under it. The pain and peculiar diet which I was ordered to purſue, brought on a fever which killed all the roſes in my cheeks, and had nearly killed me. The wires were taken out, and my tooth remained nearly in the ſame ſituation.

As I had ſuffered ſo much in attempting to do violence to nature, I reſolved to ſubmit to her in future with patience; but the little appearance of decay, which I have hinted at before, became a BLACK SPOT, and prognoſticated, as the doctor ſaid, an approaching *caries*. This was terrifying indeed! Any thing on earth was tolerable in compariſon with a *caries*. Nay, I know not whether, in the agonies of my mind on the apprehenſions of it, I ſhould not have ſubmitted cheerfully to death rather than have lived with a black ſpeck on a front tooth. But hope once more ſhone upon my boſom. A kind dentiſt reſtored my ſpirits by declaring that he was poſſeſſed of an art which would prevent all bad conſequences, and continue the beauty of my pearly ornaments,

ornaments, ſet between rubies, unſullied during life.

The remedy was *tranſplantation*. I ſubmitted to extraction with a ſtoical heroiſm. A chimney-ſweeper, who attended at my ſide, parted with his beſt tooth for a ſhilling, and it was planted, reeking with blood and warm with life, in the ſocket whence the odious tooth with the black ſpeck had been juſt drawn. I was now in a ſtate of exultation. I ſaw that my gums might defy old age and decay, and gloried in the idea of having almoſt found out the art of rejuveneſcence. My triumph was but tranſient. A tumour and inflammation enſued. The pain I ſuffered is not to be deſcribed; but I was ſtill a heroine, animated with the idea that the pain was but for a ſhort time, and that the happineſs would be for life.

I became ſo ill as to be under the neceſſity of ſeeking medical advice. Shame prevented me from informing my phyſician of the cauſe of my illneſs. He was at a loſs to account for it; but from the appearance was induced to preſcribe large doſes of mercury. The diſeaſe ſtill continued, and I loſt ſeveral of my teeth and a great part of my gums and palate. My lips were diſtorted, or corroded, in a frightful manner. The

phyſician at laſt inſiſted on the neceſſity of my undergoing what he called a ſalivation. He ſaid my life depended upon it. I ſubmitted, and preſerved my exiſtence; but how ſhall I deſcribe what I felt on looking into the glaſs. Every appearance of old age and deformity. I will leave to your imagination the ideas of horror and grief which tormented my heart. I gave up all pretenſions to beauty, as indeed I well might; for my countenance was the picture of every thing diſguſtful. Think of paleneſs tinged with a livid yellow, a ſhrivelled ſkin, diſtorted lips, and toothleſs gums.

I find upon enquiry that the perſon whoſe tooth had been placed in my gums was labouring under a complication of the filthieſt of diſeaſes, and that the tooth inoculated them all on me. I have heard that I am not the only victim to ſuch follies and unnatural practices. I underſtand the tranſplanting of teeth is extremely dangerous, even when the perſon from whom it is taken is healthy; but it is likely that a healthy and temperate perſon would eſteem himſelf too much to part with his teeth for money. He muſt be an abject wretch, and one whoſe veracity, if he declares himſelf healthy, can never be ſafely relied on.

That

That my life is ſpared is a mercy ſcarcely deſerved. I hope to ſpend it in acquiring a more ſolid mind and judgment than I poſſeſſed, when, from the dictates of vanity, I ſuffered myſelf to conſent to an unnatural violence, cruel to another and moſt injurious to myſelf. It will contribute ſomething to atone for my folly, if by communicating the conſequences of it I warn others from its imitation. Adieu.

SIR,

IT pleaſed Providence to give me a ſtrong conſtitution, and having a life of perfect eaſe and plenty, I began at the age of eighteen to grow rather plump, not to ſay fat and corpulent. Shocking words thoſe! and to avoid their being applied to me, I reſolved to have recourſe to ſuch methods as I had heard were effectually uſed in reducing the body to a moderate ſize. I drank vinegar copiouſly, and all acids that I could procure. I lived upon vegetables, ſcarcely taſting animal food. I laced ſo tightly, as to ſqueeze myſelf into half my natural dimenſions; and I ſweated myſelf every day between two feather beds till I was ready to faint. Theſe methods were not unſucceſsful. I gradually ſhrunk to a *lady all ſkin*

and bone. I felt great complacency in ſucceſs; but I was little acquainted with the conſequences which were ſhortly to enſue. The ſtate of debility to which I had reduced myſelf, ſoon brought on what the phyſicians called an *atrophy*. And a moſt ſhocking figure I made. I looked in the glaſs with many a wiſhful ſigh after my departed plumpneſs. I was obliged to call in a phyſician, who, diſcovering the cauſe of my diſorder, recommended what he jocoſely termed kitchen phyſic. He gradually led me from milk and eggs to roaſt beef, plumb-pudding, port and ale. He ſays I was at death's door, and indeed I believe it; for my face in my looking glaſs looked juſt like a Death's head ſculptured on a tomb-ſtone. I now laugh and grow fat; and, thank Heaven, am in a fair way of recovering ſome ſhare of that health which I fooliſhly deſtroyed. I hope my example will warn others from falling into ſimilar dangers, who may not have ſtrength of conſtitution ſufficient to eſcape them. It is a ſecret that muſt go no farther; but I am to be married next week to a gentleman of large fortune, and every other qualification requiſite to make the ſtate happy. If I had continued ſo thin and ghaſtly as I once was, I believe he would as ſoon have thought of marrying one of the ſkeletons in Surgeon's Hall as me. Adieu.

Another correſpondent informs me that, having pimples in her face, ſhe clandeſtinely purchaſed a quack medicine, which ſhe took without advice and without judgment, till at laſt ſhe brought on a diſorder which had nearly proved fatal.

I have heard many complain of having caught colds, fevers, and a long train of dreadful diſeaſes, by dreſſing in the faſhion on firſt coming out after a long confinement in their bed-chamber.

Many alſo complain of nervous weakneſſes, occaſioned by an abſtinence, ſuch as hermits and anachorites hardly ever practiſed, an abſtinence from ſuch kinds and quantities of food as are really neceſſary to the ſupport of nature, an abſtinence proceeding from a deſire to preſerve their ſhape, and to perpetuate their youth and beauty, but which cauſes extreme debility and premature old age.

I wiſh young ladies to be duly ſenſible of the value of health as well as of beauty. Beauty indeed is ſcarcely compatible with ill health; but if it were, it really would be a bad exchange to give up health for beauty. Under the languor

of diſeaſe, and the torment of pain, many will one day lament that deſire of improving their perſons which led them in their youth to violate nature, and to weaken the foundations of the whole fabric while they were endeavouring to decorate the front.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Profeſſion of a Schoolmaſter in Schools of liberal Education.

On croit ſottement qu'il eſt plus honorable de conduire in qualite de capitaine, une troup, d'ouvriers, ou de payſans qu'on nomme ſoldats, que de commander a de jeunes ſeigneurs, et de leur former le cœur et l'eſprit. CARACCIOLI.

AS nothing contributes more to the encouragement and encreaſe of excellence in a profeſſion than the honour beſtowed upon it, and the eſteem in which it is held by the world; it is an uſeful and laudable effort which ſome benevolent writers have made to raiſe ſome employments of a moſt important uſe from the contempt into which they have unfortunately fallen.

Every one is ready to allow the importance of education, yet few entertain a due reſpect for the profeſſion which is to adminiſter it. The world is governed by names; and with the word Pedagogue has been aſſociated the idea of a pedant, a mere plodder, a petty tyrant, a gerund-grinder, and a bum-bruſher.

But as the profeſſion is not only in the very firſt degree uſeful to ſociety, but attended with peculiar

peculiar hardſhips and difficulties, it deſerves the recompence and alleviation of eſteem.

The ſchoolmaſter's employment has been compared to the puniſhment inflicted on the Danaides and on Syſiphus. His labour knows no end; for, ſuppoſing one ſet of ſcholars at one time to be attentive and to improve, yet they are ſucceeded ſoon after by new ſcholars, and the whole work is to be recommenced.

He languiſhes over the repetition of rules and precepts, which have nothing amuſing to his fancy, or improving to his underſtanding. He goes his round like the mill-horſe, and his ears ring with caſes, declenſions, genders, conjugations, *Propria quæ maribus*, and *As in præſenti*.

Occidit miſeros crambe repetita magiſtros.

" Quid injucundiſſimum in ſcholâ mihi viſum
" ſit, fatebor: illam eadem penſa retractandi,
" eoſdemque vicies vel tricies ſcriptorum errores
" corrigenda neceſſitatem." GESNER.

He is converſant with thoſe who continue in his company unwillingly, and are impatient to be gone; among the petulant, the peeviſh, the idle, the inattentive, the ungrateful, and the refractory.

" Quam

" Quam ingratus labor, totos dies verſari in-
" ter pueros, inter invitos plerumque, et ſub-
" ſtrictis veluti auriculis horam, quæ ſe carcere
" emittat, expectantes; inter petulantes moro-
" ſos, pigros, reluctantes diſciplinæ!"

GESNER.

He inhales duſt and impure air, and his ears are never relieved from noiſe. His patience and temper are continually put to trial: he bears about him an inſtrument of torture, and is frequently obliged to inflict puniſhment with the ſeverity of an executioner.

If he ſpare the rod, he muſt be frequently buſied in reprimanding, admoniſhing, remonſtrating, and adviſing thoſe who hate him for his pains; and, if they can have no other revenge, delight in giving uneaſineſs, by teizing the temper of their beſt friend, their foſter father. Few occupations exerciſe the temper, or tend more to ſpoil it, than that of a ſchoolmaſter.

He is liable to inſult and affronting behaviour from the ſenior boys, who are but too apt to reſent with rancorous virulence the exerciſe of that diſcipline on themſelves, which they at the ſame time have ſenſe enough to know is no more than the maſter's duty.

He

He is expoſed to continual miſrepreſentation. The tongue of every boy in his ſchool, however ſilly or malicious, has a tale to tell concerning his miſtakes, his miſmanagement, his ſeverity, his partiality, his parſimony. Himſelf and his family are painted in the blackeſt colours which malice can invent, and infantine inexperience conceive.

The maſter is uſually blamed for the faults of nature. A boy is ſtupid or idle, and learns nothing. He is removed; the maſter loſes his ſcholar and the emoluments attending him; but that is not ſufficient, he loſes ſomething of his peace and his character: for the boy is removed in ill humour. The parents and friends cannot bear that an imputation ſhould fall on the boy; and therefore the whole load of cenſure, aggravated with a thouſand falſehoods, is laid on the maſter's negligence or inability.

If he ventures to vindicate himſelf, he is under the neceſſity of laying the blame on the boy, which his generoſity will often not permit; or if a regard to himſelf and juſtice compels him to ſpeak, the offence already given is aggravated beyond all bounds, and both the boy and his friends become implacable enemies for life.

" Illud

" Illud in primis ægrè ferebam, ſi cum boni
" me viri officio funetum eſſe putarem, expoſtu-
" latum venirent mecum et queſtum injuriam ii,
" quorum me liberis optime conſuluiſſe, mihi
" conſtabat." GESNER.

Theſe are only a few among the many evils which torment a profeſſion highly uſeful, and even neceſſary to the exiſtence of ſociety. It muſt be confeſſed that in ſome caſes there are the alleviations of lucre. It muſt be confeſſed that the world is not ſo bad as not to furniſh many boys of a docile and amiable diſpoſition, and many parents who are grateful and candid. But ſtill there are few employments in life attended with more irkſome labour, more liable to ill uſage, and leſs well rewarded by thoſe whom it ſerves, than that of the ſchoolmaſter.

It is, I ſaid, in ſome caſes lucrative; but it ſhould be remembered, that the lucre, when it is conſiderable, uſually ariſes from the boarding and lodging of pupils in the houſe, and not from the buſineſs of inſtruction and the labour of a ſchool. And where the pupils are lodged and boarded in the houſe, the ſuperintendant's trouble is tenfold greater, and the ill-uſage to which he is expoſed not to be deſcribed by language.

The

The caprice and ill-humour of many boys is ſuch as is never to be ſatisfied. As they know little of the true nature of things on one hand, ſo on the other they are prone to judge of them with precipitancy. As they have not yet felt the ill uſage of the world, ſo they want that ſort of ſympathy for others which experience only can teach. They cenſure all who are concerned with them without judgment and without mercy. They delight in doing miſchief and injuries for diverſion; and, upon the whole, the ſuperintendant of a number of boys in his own houſe has a taſk ſomething like that of a keeper of a mad-houſe, a gaol, or a collection of wild beaſts.

Yet ingenious and learned men ſometimes ſubmit to this taſk voluntarily. They certainly do, and upon the principle of chooſing the leaſt of two evils; for it is better than to ſtarve, and to involve a family in all the evils of poverty.

> Want is the ſcorn of every wealthy fool,
> And wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule.

Hard neceſſity forces them to ſubmit to the yoke, and when their ſhoulders have become galled till they are callous, they bear it with a patient inſenſibility.

Yet

Yet if we take our ideas of the buſineſs of the inſtructor from the poet, what can be more pleaſureable?

Delightful taſk! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to ſhoot,
To pour the freſh inſtruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enlivening ſpirit, and to fix
The generous purpoſe in the glowing breaſt;
Oh ſpeak the joy!——

If there were no perverſeneſs, obſtinacy, ingratitude, and ſtupidity, the taſk might, to a benevolent heart, be delightful. There is ſomething truly agreeable in aſſiſting the efforts of a youthful mind which is at once truly ingenious and ingenuous. And certainly many virtues may be advantageouſly exerciſed in bearing with ill uſage, and doing good to thoſe who hate and deſpiſe you.

" Jam vero parùm mihi non dicam generoſus
" ſed humanus videtur cui non maximam volup-
" tatem adferat ingens quæ in ſchola offertur,
" benè faciendi occaſio. Ducuntur in ſcholas
" et fidei præceptorum committuntur parvi ho-
" mines, rerum omnium imperiti et rudes, ad
" vitia omnia proclives. Quod majus præſtari
" vel ipſis, vel parentibus ipſorum et cognatis,
" vel rei publicæ adeo, beneficium poteſt, quam
" ſi rudibus animis ea inſtillentur, unde pro ſtu-
" pidis,

" pidis, prudentes; pro mutis, infantibus certè,
" facundi; pro malitioſis et turpibus benefici
" fiant et honeſti; pro impiis denique, Chriſ-
" tiani? Si doctorum opera fiant boni viri, qui
" et ſuis ſupereſſe rebus, et præſidio eſſe ſuis
" familiis, et ornare rem publicam, pro captu
" quiſque ſuo, poſſint? Equidem liquido con-
" firmare poſſum, hâc me vel ſolâ cogitatione,
" ſæpe abſterſiſſe, quæ offerebantur, moleſtias:
" ſatis compenſatos labores judicaſſe meos, ſi vel
" ad unum alterumque ille fructus, quem modo
" dixi, perveniret." GESNER.

It is a fine opportunity of ſerving human nature and one's country, and I admire the philanthropy of thoſe who, from ſuch pure motives, are influenced to undergo labours ſo ſevere, contumelies ſo inſulting, ſlanders ſo unjuſt, ingratitude ſo baſe. I fear the number is ſmall

——————vix ſunt totidem quot
Thebarum portæ vel divitis oſtia Nili.

The greater part ſubmit to the labour with the common ſtimulus of human exertion, the hope of gain; and when it is conſidered that parents purchaſe not only eaſe and exemption from the toil of inſtruction and the trouble of their childrens ill humour, not only accompliſhments uſeful and ornamental, but alſo food, accommoda-

tions,

tions, and habitation for their offspring, the gain of the maſters ſhould not be conſidered as earned too eaſily. If the maſters acquit themſelves well in an undertaking ſo arduous, they are juſtly entitled not only to profit but to honour.

If I ſhould be aſked, to what purpoſe are theſe obſervations on the miſery of ſchoolmaſters, I ſhould anſwer, that they are intended to vindicate from contempt an order of men at once uſeful and oppreſſed; to induce parents to become more candid and conſiderate in their behaviour to them, and to perſuade maſters themſelves, actuated by a due ſenſe of their own value in ſociety, to ſcorn that meanneſs, ſubmiſſion, and obſequiouſneſs, which invites, and almoſt juſtifies contempt.

It unfortunately happens that many maſters exhibit a ſervility of manners which, while it flatters the weak parent, diſgraces the profeſſion. Many purſe-proud parents are too apt to conſider all whom they pay as ſervants, and to require an obſequiouſneſs in the inſtructors of their children incompatible with the ſpirit of a liberal man worthy to ſuperintend a liberal education. They demand a ſlaviſh diſpoſition in him whom they wiſh to teach their children liberality both by precept and example. Men of ſenſe and liberal minds

minds cannot ſubmit patiently. Others occupy their place, and ſucceed by adulation and by the mean arts of pleaſing; and thus is the profeſſion degraded, and education becomes, inſtead of a fine philoſophical preparation for the conduct of life, a mere mechanical ſkill in writing, reading, caſting accounts, dancing, and fiddling. And thus it muſt be while maſters are obliged to attend more to pleaſing the parent's vanity, and ſubmitting to his pride, than to ſerving the pupil in the rugged path of an honeſt diſcipline.

BOOK THE NINTH.

CHAP. I.

Of the Inferiority of modern to ancient Muſic, with reſpect to its Effect on the human Mind.

IF a general ardour of a whole people in the purſuit of excellence be likely to obtain it in its higheſt degree, it might reaſonably be expected that the Engliſh nation ſhould at this time be ſingularly diſtinguiſhed for a ſkill in muſic. The muſical mania, if it may be ſo called, has diffuſed itſelf from the court to the cottage, from the orcheſtra of royal theatres to the ruſtics in the gallery of a country church. As Juvenal ſaid of the Greeks of his time who migrated to Rome for intereſt, that it was a nation of comedians, we may ſay the Engliſh are a nation of muſicians.

But has this general ardour produced that ſtupendous unexampled excellence which might have been expected? I allow the effect only to be an adequate criterion of that excellence. And what is the uſual effect of a concert? It is in general

an

an admiration of the performers, of the ſkill in execution, the volubility of fingers, the quickneſs of the eye, and the delicacy of the ear. But how are the paſſions affected? Look round the room and ſee the index of the paſſions, the eyes and the countenances of the audience. Smiles and complacent looks abound; but there are no indications of thoſe ſudden tranſitions of violent emotion which muſic is ſaid to have charms ſufficient to excite. A few may ſometimes appear *affected*; but there is reaſon to ſuſpect that it is too often an *affectation*, in a ſenſe not the moſt laudable or amiable.

Among the ancients the effects of muſic are ſaid to haxe been almoſt miraculous. The celebrated Ode of Dryden has made every one acquainted with the magic power of Timotheus over the emotions of the human heart. And all who have read any thing of ancient hiſtory muſt have remarked the wonderful effects attributed to the muſical inſtrument in the hand of a maſter.

Among a hundred other ſtories which evince the power of muſic, I recollect the following: Pythagoras was once likely to be troubled by a company of young men inflamed with wine, and petulant with the natural inſolence of youthful levity. The philoſopher wiſhed to repreſs their

turbulence; but forbore to addreſs them in the language of philoſophy, which they would either not have attended to, or have treated with deriſion. He ſaid nothing; but ordered the muſician to play a grave majeſtic tune, of the Doric ſtyle. The effect was powerful and inſtantaneous. The young men were brought to their ſober ſenſes, were aſhamed of their wanton behaviour, and with one accord tore off the chaplets of flowers with which they had decorated their temples in the hour of convivial gaiety. They liſtened to the philoſopher. Their hearts were opened to inſtruction by muſic, and the powerful impreſſion being well-timed, produced in them a permanent reformation.

How deſireable is it to revive the muſic of Pythagoras! How conciſe a method of philoſophizing to the purpoſe! What ſermon or moral lecture would have produced a ſimilar effect?

But nothing of this kind was ever effected by the moſt ſucceſsful efforts of modern muſic. Let us ſuppoſe a caſe ſomewhat ſimilar to the preceding. Let us imagine a number of intoxicated rakes entering the theatre with a profeſſed intention to cauſe a riot. Such a caſe has often been real. The muſic in the orcheſtra has done all that it could do to ſooth the growing rage; but

it was as impotent and contemptible as a piſtol againſt a battery. It would be a fine thing for the proprietors if a tune or two could ſave the benches, and the fiddlers preclude the carpenters. But Timotheus and the Doric ſtrains are no more; yet ſurely in ſo general a ſtudy of muſic it might be expected that ſomething of their perfection might be revived.

" That the muſic of the ancients," ſays Jeremy Collier, " could command farther than the " modern, is paſt diſpute. Whether they were " maſters of a greater compaſs of notes, or knew " the ſecret of varying them more artificially; " whether they *adjuſted the intervals of ſilence more* " *exactly*, had their hands or their voices further " improved, or their inſtruments better contriv- " ed; whether they had a deeper inſight into the " philoſophy of nature, or underſtood the laws " of the union of the ſoul and body more tho- " roughly; and thence were enabled to touch " the paſſions, ſtrengthen the ſenſe, or prepare " the medium with greater advantage; whether " they excelled us in all, or in how many of " theſe ways, is not ſo clear: however this is " certain, that our improvements in this kind " are little better than *alehouſe crowds* with re- " ſpect to theirs."

I muſt

I muſt leave it to the Burneys and Bateſes of the age to determine to what cauſe the little effect of muſic on the paſſions is to be aſcribed. In reviving and performing the works of Handel they have done much towards vindicating the declining honours of impaſſioned muſic. But ſtill the commanding effect recorded by antiquity ſeems to remain a grand deſideratum.

I profeſs to conſider the ſubject not as a muſician, but as a moraliſt; in which character I cannot help wiſhing to find that ſort of muſic cultivated which poſſeſſes an empire over the heart, and which, like oil poured on the troubled waves of the ſea, can ſooth the tumultuous paſſions to tranquillity. I wiſh to ſee the muſician who not only pleaſes my ear by his ſounds, and delights my eye by his legerdemain, but who, in the words of Horace, *irritat*, *mulcet*, enrages or ſtills my emotions at his diſcretion. I wiſh to hear muſical Shakeſpeares and Miltons touch the lyre, or inſpire the tube.

I ſhould have ventured to conclude, from the univerſal application to muſic, from the perfection of the inſtruments, and the ingenuity of the compoſitions, that the art is at this time arrived at its ultimate excellence. It is not eaſy to conceive that much more can be done; and I am

very doubtful whether the ancients had equal excellence in theory or in execution. Yet, after all, when I conſider the effect, I am compelled, however reluctantly, to deplore the great inferiority of the modern to ancient muſic. As I am no artiſt on the pipe or on the lyre, I can only ſuſpect that the defect ariſes from the want of ſimplicity. It may not, after all, be unjuſt to ſuſpect that the accounts handed down of the ſtupendous effects of muſic among the Greeks are exaggerated by *Græcia mendax*, or that diſpoſition of ancient Greece to fiction, which gave riſe to the nonſenſe of mythology.

CHAP. II.

Of ludicrous Prints.

Animum picturâ paſcis. VIRG.

POISON may be converted into medicine; and ridicule, which, when directed againſt morality and religion, operates like a peſtilence, may be uſed to expoſe vice and folly with peculiar efficacy.

The mode of ridiculing by prints has ſome advantages over that by writing and argument. Its effect is inſtantaneous; and they who cannot read, or have not ſenſe enough to comprehend a refined piece of raillery, are able to ſee and receive a very powerful impreſſion from a good caricatura.

The lower claſſes in London, it may be ſuppoſed, have not time, inclination, or ability, to read much, but their minds are filled with ideas, not only by the multitude of occurrences, but alſo by the prints which are obtruded on their notice in the windows of ſhops conſpicuouſly ſituated in the moſt frequented ſtreets. And I believe they often receive impreſſions either favourable or unfavourable to their honeſty and happi-

neſs as they loiter at a window with a burden on their backs, and gape, unmindful of their toil, at the comical production of the ingenious deſigner. Every benevolent man muſt wiſh that whatever repreſentations have a tendency to corrupt and miſlead them might be kept out of ſight, and only ſuch exhibited in the window as may divert them innocently, or convey ſome uſeful inſtruction. I ſay nothing on the ſubject of indecent prints at preſent, as every one muſt acknowledge that they infuſe a poiſon, the bad effects of which none can trace to their ultimate malignity.

But it appears to me that the exhibition of the firſt magiſtrate, and of great ſtateſmen, in caricatura muſt contribute to diminiſh or deſtroy that reverence which is always due to legal authority and eſtabliſhed rank, and which is confeſſedly conducive to the moſt valuable ends of human ſociety. The virulence of party heſitates not to repreſent royalty itſelf in ſituations which muſt render it contemptible in the eyes of kennel-rakers, ſhoe-blackers, chimney-ſweepers, and beggars. Their contempt, it will be ſaid, is of little conſequence, and yet theſe perſonages made their power felt in the memorable month of June 1780; and riot and diſorder are greatly promoted by emancipating them from all reverence

for

for their ſuperiors; and how can they reſpect the ſubordinate dignities who are taught to defile the fountain of honour, and to malign the author of all civil dignity? Beſides, the effect is by no means confined to their order. The contempt muſt have been diffuſed through the higher and middle ranks before it deſcended to them, and there is great reaſon to believe that the turbulent oppoſition to authority which has diſgraced the preſent reign, originated and grew from the contempt thrown on the higher orders by various methods, and among others, by ludicrous repreſentation on the copper plate.

Our laws have been careful of the reputation of the ſubject, and libels cannot be publiſhed without the peril of a proſecution. But the framers of the laws did not perhaps foreſee, that the engraver as well as the writer might be guilty of defamation, and would deſerve to be reſtrained by the terrors and the penalties of legal controul. Our love of liberty is ſo ardent, that, like other violent paſſions, it overſhoots its mark, and loſes the object at which it aimed. Elſe a practice which infringes on private liberty more than any act of any king in this country, could not be ſuffered to prevail without reſtraint, and with triumphant impunity. What can ſavour more of the oppreſſion of wanton tyranny than not to

permit a man to be ugly in his perſon without exhibiting him as a ſpectacle, as a laughing-ſtock in the ſtreets of the great city? Is a man to be put to ſhame, to ſtand as it were in the pillory, the mark of ſcorn to point her finger at, becauſe nature has given him a long noſe, a protuberant belly, or a gouty leg?

Indeed, of all ſatire, none is ſo ungenerous as that which reflects on perſonal deformity, one of the principal of the τα ουκ εφ' ημιν, the things which are not in our own power, and for which we are often no more accountable than for bad weather, peſtilential blaſts, or inundations. But the inventors of caricaturas are not contented with repreſenting the deformity as it really exiſts, but glory in their ability to add to diſtortion, and render an irregularity or defect, which would paſs unnoticed, eminently and ridiculouſly conſpicuous. A man of ſenſe and fortitude, it will be ſaid, may deſpiſe a contempt which ariſes from circumſtances, for which he cannot be blamed; but is the very perſon who urges this poſſeſſed of ſuch ſenſe, and ſuch fortitude, as to deſpiſe any kind of ridicule which will adhere to him as a ſtigma of reproach? With all our pretenſions to wiſdom, there are none but thoſe who have loſt their ſenſibility who can patiently bear to become objects

jects of public deriſion either for ſingularities of the mind or the body.

The practice of exhibiting all perſons of conſequence in caricatura may therefore not only injure the public, by diminiſhing the reſpect due to official authority, but cruelly invade the peace of families, and diſtreſs the boſom of an unoffending individual. It deſerves therefore to be reprobated by all good and thinking men, who are unwilling to ſacrifice, for the ſake of a laugh, public welfare and private tranquillity.

Ridicule has been always ſuppoſed peculiarly injurious, as it is confeſſedly indecent, in the affairs of religion. I believe wiſdom will always be juſtified by her children, and that Chriſtianity is founded on a rock ſo firmly, that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it; but yet, I am convinced, that to treat its miniſters or ordinances with contempt may do it great injury among the lower orders and weak minds, who will be thus led to deſpiſe what cannot be deſpiſed with ſafety. There are few ſubjects which the deſigners of ludicrous prints take more delight in than to repreſent clergymen in a laughable ſituation and figure. I mention one inſtance of a print, which would hardly deſerve notice if it had not become popular among the vulgar. The

Vicar and Moſes is often hung up on the walls of the farm-houſe, where the clergyman uſed to be reverenced as a ſaint, and conſequently was able to do great good; but is it to be ſuppoſed that this reverence will not be diminiſhed among the children at leaſt, who from their infancy are accuſtomed to behold the parſon as an object of deriſion, a glutton, and a drunkard?

Any mode of affording innocent diverſion, of exciting mirth without giving pain, is not only allowable, but deſirable in a world abounding with evil, and in a ſtate of exiſtence which is of neceſſity burthened with care. But all human things require boundaries,

Quos ultra citraque nequit conſiſtere rectum.

The genius of a Hogarth is worthy of admiration as an excellence, and worthy of honour as capable of conveying great good to ſociety. And indeed, it muſt be acknowledged, that Hogarth finely moralized his pencil. His imitators have not reached his excellence in repreſentation, and they have ſcarcely aimed at his morality.

Some late deſigners in caricatura have great merit; and if they would confine their ridicule to vice and villainy, they would add to the praiſe which is due to them as men of ſkill and genius, that

that which is ſuperior, the praiſe of benevolence, and the merit of doing good in their generation.

Many may be diſpoſed to conſider the ludicrous prints as trifles; but apparent trifles are acknowledged by all wiſe men to lead to ſerious evils, and ought therefore to be carefully ſuppreſſed while they continue trifles, and while the ſuppreſſion is conſequently practicable. Every good member of ſociety muſt acknowledge the value of decency, good order, public tranquillity, and private ſecurity; and every ſenſible and obſerving man may obſerve, that all theſe may be deſtroyed by the libels of the pencil. No one knows whoſe turn it may be to ſuffer next, and it is therefore the intereſt of all, even of the perpetrators of the miſchief themſelves, to diſcourage the prevalence of wanton aſſaſſination.

CHAP. III.

One or two Sketches drawn at a Watering-place.

SIR,

I AM juſt arrived from one of thoſe places of faſhionable reſort which are known by the ludicrous name of Watering-places. I always go to them rather for the ſake of obſerving men and manners than for my health; and as my philoſophy is more like that of Democritus than that of Heraclitus, I have found and embraced ſeveral occaſions for hearty laughter.

There is indeed in moſt places folly and vanity enough to entertain a *Democritian*; but a watering-place may be called, in the language of good old Bunyan, Vanity Fair. Methinks I ſee, with the eyes of imagination, a glittering idol ſet up in every one of them, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, and all the votaries falling proſtrate before it, and worſhipping with as much ardour of devotion as pilgrims kneeled at the ſhrine of a martyr.

I drew one or two portraits, or rather haſty ſketches, for my amuſement, which are much at your ſervice if they can contribute to divert you in

in your Winter Evenings. I muſt premiſe, that if your readers make perſonal application, it is a hundred to one but they will be miſtaken. I only mention what I ſaw in the ſpace of three mornings, not being able to ſpend much time from home.

Counſellor Confident came upon the public parade with a newſpaper in his left hand, and a glaſs for ſhort-ſighted eyes in his right. He waddled along in a careleſs mood for about five minutes, and if any new face appeared, he contemplated it ſteadily, then turned away abruptly if he thought it belonged not to a perſon of faſhion, with an air of contempt, and with a ſeverity of countenance which would induce you to ſuppoſe that he had juſt taken a ſip of verjuice. He ſeems angry with himſelf for having troubled himſelf to take notice of ſuch a reptile. His airs and motions are uneaſy till he meets a titled lady or gentleman, when he calls out with a voice that might be heard half a mile off, and with an air of affected joy and familiarity—"Pray, my Lord, or my Lady, what ſort of a "ball had you laſt night? Fame has reported "that you were there; and I ſhould have made "a point of being there too, if I had had an idea "that you would have honoured it with your "company." Without waiting for an anſwer, he

he goes on, in a ſtrain of vociferation loud enough to drown all other voices—" Ha! ha! " he!—Have you ſeen the paper this morning— " Here is an excellent ſtroke at Dr. Prettyman. " If you will give me leave I will read it." He then begun to read with an affected air and tone, learned from the theatres, or the lecturers on the art of ſpeaking, detaining his hearers, who diſplayed evident marks of inattention, except indeed that they affectedly laughed at due intervals, for the double purpoſe, of ſhewing their politeneſs and their teeth.

This man may have much merit, but his evident conſciouſneſs of it, if he has it, is diſguſtful, and if he has it not, his affectation is ſeriouſly reprehenſible. He ſeems to think himſelf a Coloſſus, and that others have nothing to do but to look up to him and admire. I ſingled him out, as he was the firſt that occurred on the one morning, when I ſat on a bench with my black lead pencil on purpoſe to ſketch manners and characters; but I afterwards ſaw many more who aſſumed airs of ſuperiority, and thought themſelves, and were thought by many others, very clever, and of great conſequence, becauſe they ſwaggered up and down, and talked immoderately loud and faſt, with an appearance of ſetting all others at defiance, or conſidering them as non-entities,

at

at the ſame time that they in fact anxiouſly ſolicited their notice.

The great object I found was to diſplay the graces of the perſon and the airs of gentility. Almoſt every one came on the parade profeſſing a great regard for all his acquaintance, though it was evident that every word and attitude was meant to attract regard and raiſe admiration.

Lady Smirk entered with a large party, who had agreed to raffle for a ſet of books elegantly bound. "The books," ſaid ſhe, in a voice which would have ſerved to have reſponded in a chant with Counſellor Confident at the diſtance of the Royal Exchange to St. Paul's, "are great "favourites of mine. They are the works of "Bacon and Locke. It is not ſo much the "matter of Bacon which I admire, as the lan-"guage, which is inimitably delicate and refined. "And as to Locke, have you read his Eſſay on "Underſtanding? Ah, my dear, if you have "not, you have a pleaſure to come which I envy "you. I think myſelf under great obligations "to Locke. To him I am indebted for accu-"racy and diſcrimination of thought, and I "really think no woman can be completely ac-"compliſhed without having read his Eſſay; "and then he is *ſo* ſentimental!"

This

This ſpeech, accompanied with that peculiar grimace which diſtinguiſhes perſons who affect faſhion, excited a general admiration; but to ſhew the univerſality of her talents, my lady, without any reply, and without any form of tranſition, deſcanted for half an hour on the laſt night's ball and the news of the day, with equal eloquence and loudneſs. After ſhe had gained the attention of every body, which was the principal object in view, ſhe ſtept into her carriage and drove away; not before ſhe had written her name at the head of the liſt of rafflers which hung in the bookſeller's window. To write the name there at all I found was an object of ambition, but to ſtand at the head of the liſt was a glory not raſhly to be declined by any of thoſe who profeſs themſelves votaries of faſhion, and make an annual pilgrimage to her ſhrine.

The vanity of enrolling a name, in order to become illuſtrious, in the raffle-book or paper expoſed to public view, I found very general; but it is, like many other vanities, productive of advantage to the traders, as it enables them to get rid of ſome commodity, not very vendible, with conſiderable advantage, and alſo brings cuſtomers to their ſhop, who, having for the moſt part more money than wit, uſually verify on thoſe occaſions the old ſaying concerning the facility

cility with which a fool and his money are ſepa-rated. Not but there are many exceptions to this rule; for it is obſervable in the preſent times, that faſhion, being very much attached to ſelf, has found out the value of parſimony; and I have heard a complaint among the dealers in ſmall wares at theſe places, that people of faſhion ſpend ſo much in London, from the neceſſity of making a figure, that the annual retreat to the watering-place, is often formed on the ſyſtem of the meaneſt œconomy.

But it is certain, that no method of conquer-ing avarice in people of faſhion is ſo ſucceſsful as attacking it with the aſſiſtance of the auxiliary vanity. The perſons whoſe intereſts is con-cerned at public places are well acquainted with this truth, and the ſubſcription-books are always left open to public view; a circumſtance which induces many to put down their guinea, who would otherwiſe prefer the retention of it in the ſilken purſe.

If I were to deſcribe half the laughable at-tempts to obtain diſtinction among the frequenters of theſe places, I ſhould fill a longer time than you uſually allow to theſe papers in your Win-ter Evenings. They are laughable, but inno-

cent

cent enough in general, and therefore ſcarcely deſerve ſevere cenſure.

Then why do you expoſe them to deriſion? enquires the objector. I anſwer, that they deſerve deriſion, though they might eſcape the laſh of ſerious ſatire. They ariſe from a foible only; yet they produce a behaviour contemptuous of others, however virtuous or ſkilful, who have not the cant language, and the capricious modes of dreſſing, articulating, and moving, which from time to time are eſtabliſhed by an empreſs, whoſe throne is erected by folly and ſupported by pride.

But in the particular inſtances of inſolence and affectation which I have above deſcribed, there was ſomething not only ridiculous, but extremely culpable, as I have ſince been informed by perſons who were at the watering-place with the perſonages, and who knew their characters, and their family, and other connections.

Counſellor Confident, at the time he was figuring away at the public place, had a wife with five children, and a miſtreſs with four, who were barely ſupported with neceſſaries, and have fallen to ſuch a ſtate of poverty ſince his elope-

ment

ment to France, that the legitimate children are obliged to be ſupported by the contribution of a few relations of his wife, and the illegitimate are actually come upon the pariſh, and are now in the workhouſe, except the eldeſt, who was laſt week bound apprentice, at the age of five, to a chimney-ſweeper for fourteen years.

Lady Smirk led the ton, and was as gay as vice can be. All who approached her conſidered her as the model of faſhionable life, and were happy to catch her graces, as the moon ſeems to glory in ſhining with light borrowed from the ſun. Who would have thought, in the mean time, that the baronet, her huſband, was obliged to live in want and obſcurity, and with an aſſumed name, in order to avoid his creditors, and that two of his ſons, unable to bear want and diſgrace, and at the ſame time unqualified for any trade or profeſſion, had, at the very time at which her ladyſhip ſhone with ſuch brilliancy, taken the raſh ſtep of entering as ſoldiers in the India Company's ſervice, and were now on their voyage.

It is certainly a great misfortune to contract ſuch a taſte and veneration for faſhionable life, as to ſacrifice all virtue, and all that ought to be dear in domeſtic life, to the pleaſure of being admired

mired in public, or of having the envied character of a man or woman of faſhion. I am no enemy to faſhionable manners while they are innocent and reaſonable. But I muſt ever lament the vice and miſery which an ardent attachment to faſhion and the follies of public places produces among thoſe who have not fortune to ſupply the unavoidable expences attending it, and ſenſe and principle enough to reſiſt the temptations which it occaſions. Extreme vanity and pride are juſtly ridiculed; but they ought to be deteſted when they lead to bankruptcy and diſhoneſty, and to the violation of all the real decencies and natural affections of a virtuous life.

Your's, &c.

PAMPHILUS.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Preference of the Idiomatic Style and old Engliſh Phraſeology to the Derivative or Exotic.

THE idioms of the Engliſh language were formed at a time when elegance of taſte was neither known nor deſired, when learning ſlept in the long night of ignorance which overſpread all the countries of Europe, and when men were ſatisfied with expreſſing their wants without an idea of the ornaments of ſtudied language. They therefore who expect to find the old idioms elegant, expect without reaſon. The idioms are indeed often ſtrongly expreſſive, but they are for the moſt part Gothic in ſound, and ungrammatical in conſtruction.

And yet there are readers and talkers who affirm that they prefer the old and native idioms to all the innovations which have been imported from Greece and Rome. They do not like to ſee the Engliſh phraſe faſhioned after the manner of the politeſt languages which the world ever yet produced. Inſtead of complaining, I ſhould think they might rejoice, like the gardener when he

he ſees the golden pepin grafted on the crab, and the wild ſtock bluſh with honours not its own.

It may be worth while to conſider a few phraſes of the true old Engliſh idiom, and compare them with thoſe of writers who are accuſed of writing in a new-fangled ſtyle. I ſhall ſelect my inſtances from Sir Roger L'Eſtrange, an author whom no one will accuſe of ſpoiling his native language with exotic elegance. He was, I believe, one of the mob of gentlemen who, in the reign of a voluptuous monarch, wrote with eaſe, and was eſteemed in his day a fine writer, and a reformer of the Engliſh language.

Some of his choiceſt phraſes, as Gordon juſtly ſays, are the following:

"Between hawk and buzzard; clawed him (I "ſuppoſe for *cloyed)* with kindneſs; alert and "friſky; guzzling down tipple; would not keep "touch; a queer putt; lay curſed hard upon "their gizzard; cram his gut; conceited noddy; "old chuff." Phraſes, as Gordon obſerves, picked up in the ſtreet from apprentices and porters, than which nothing can be more low and nauſeous.

I will

I will add a few more native graces of the language as they occurred to me on a tranſient inſpection of Sir Roger L'Eſtrange's Æſop.

" Set his chops a watering; curry favour; " ſpoke him fair; all at their wit's end; one " and all; nick the opportunity; the fox had a " fetch which he ſaw would not fadge; the " whelps fell a howling; ſetting people together " by the ears; put to a pinch for proviſions; " the ſheep went firſt to pot; it ſtuck in his " ſtomach; they came thick and threefold; to " run a-head; took it in dudgeon; cheek by " joul; as things go now-a-days; the tory " took him in the crown; pluck up a good " heart; fell tooth and nail upon him, &c."

Theſe phraſes occurred in the reſearch of a few minutes, and I believe it would be eaſy to add hundreds to their number; but it would be like ſelecting a noſegay of Dandelions. I therefore take leave of Sir Roger, fully acquitting him, in the critical court, of the high crime and miſdemeanour of corrupting the Engliſh language, by neglecting the native elegances and introducing Latiniſms in their place.

It is common to ſay, in the converſation of thoſe who cannot be ſuſpected of adulterating

Engliſh with Latin, "It makes no odds," which I think is ſufficiently idiomatic. But I muſt take the liberty of aſking the lovers of idiomatic elegance, whether the phraſe is better than "it "makes no difference." Yet difference certainly does come from *differentia*; and thoſe who uſe that phraſe muſt plead guilty.

When neceſſity is ſignified, many writers and ſpeakers in the idiomatic ſtyle chuſe to ſay, "it "muſt needs be ſo," or "I muſt needs do this "or that;" but can any perſon of taſte like this phraſe with the little mean monoſyllable "needs" in it better than when it is omitted?

The following letters will perhaps repreſent the difference of the idiomatic and derivative ſtyles in their true light. The firſt is written in the manner of Sir Roger L'Eſtrange, and the other, containing the ſame matter, in that which is eſteemed a deviation from the true old Engliſh, by a commixture of Latin phraſeology.

SIR,

IF it makes no odds to you, I ſhall nick the opportunity of beating up your quarters next week, if ſo be I can get a caſt in our old chuff's buggy. I muſt needs be with you then, ſo will try to curry favour with him. He did promiſe

me, but I do not know whether he will keep touch or no. He's a queer putt; but I will claw him with kindneſs, and when he has crammed his gut, and guzzled down ſome of my tipple (for which I know his chops water), I dare ſwear I ſhall bring it to bear. If he don't come to, I ſhall lay curſed hard upon his gizzard. If, however, I ſhould be put to a pinch, I have a month's mind to trudge it upon ten toes. I take it you're another gueſs ſort of a man than to take huff, if in caſe I ſhould be baulked. I'll be as good as my word; ſo no more at preſent from

Your's, &c.

OLD ENGLISH.

Such would be the epiſtle of Sir Roger L'Eſtrange. Let us now put the nonſenſe into *new-fangled* language.

SIR,

IF it is as *convenient* to you to *receive* me next week as at any other time, I will embrace the *opportunity* of paying you a *viſit*, *provided* I can be *conveyed* in our old friend's ſingle horſe chaiſe. I muſt of *neceſſity* be with you, and will therefore endeavour to *ingratiate* myſelf with him. He did indeed *promiſe* to *accommodate* me with his *vehicle*, but I am not certain whether or not he

will perform his *promiſe*. He is a *ſingular mortal*; but I will overcome him with kindneſs; and when once he ſhall have *gratified* his *appetite* with a good dinner, and with ſome of my wine, for which I know he has a great *inclination*, I doubt not but I ſhall accompliſh my *purpoſe*. If he ſhould not comply with my *requeſt*, I ſhall *reſent* the *refuſal ſeverely*. If I ſhould be *reduced* to the *neceſſity*, I ſhall not *heſitate* to walk. I am of *opinion* that you are not of a *diſpoſition* to be *offended* if my *intention* ſhould be *fruſtrated*; but I will perform my *promiſe*, if *poſſible*. I add no more, than that I am,

Your's, &c.

NEOTERICUS.

There is certainly an idiomatic diction not ſo vulgar as the ſpecimen which I have exhibited, and there is alſo a derivative or exotic fuller of polyſyllabic and affected *vocables*. The exceſs of either, like all other exceſſes, becomes culpable and ridiculous. Yet I cannot but think that the derivative ſtyle, when uſed in moderation, and mingled duly with the more elegant phraſes of the idiomatic, is an improvement of our language, and greatly to be preferred to a ſtyle conſiſting ſolely of Saxon monoſyllables and phraſes which, though certainly ſanctioned by long uſe, and a kind of preſcription, are yet, as Johnſon very

very properly terms them, colloquial barbariſms. They have been ſo long in the mouths of the vulgar, that they have contracted pollution.

Such barbariſms are characteriſtic and proper in doggrel and all kinds of burleſque compoſition; but ſerious and ſolemn ſubjects appear in them no leſs abſurd than a judge, an archbiſhop, or a king would ſeem in the dreſs of a harlequin, or the dirty coat and leathern apron of a blackſmith.

Every Engliſh reader criticiſes the ſtyle of Johnſon, and many condemn it entirely as not being truly Engliſh. He ventured, as became him in the character of a lexicographer and an improver of the Engliſh language, to enrich his ſtyle by expreſſing his ſolid ſenſe in an elevated phraſeology borrowed from the Latin. And I think poſterity will do him the juſtice to acknowledge, that he improved the language, not only by his dictionary, but alſo by his popular eſſays.

It ſeems probable, that the more the language is diveſted of its northern and Gothic ſounds by the gradual commixture of words and modes of expreſſion derived from poliſhed nations, whoſe

language is confeſſedly excellent, the more capable it will be of arriving at that claſſical elegance, which has made the beſt authors in Latin and Greek the luminaries and the delight of that part of the human race who are happy enough to have been born in a civilized country, and improved by a comprehenſive education.

CHAP. V.

Of ſupporting a Character of profound Erudition and ſuperior Judgment without giving any Proof of either, by mere Myſterioufneſs of Manner, by ſupercilious Silence, and other Artifices.

THERE is a ſort of perſons in the world too indolent to ſtudy, and perhaps too deficient in parts to make any great improvement, who yet ſee the advantage of a literary reputation, and aſſume the airs of deciſive critics, without having ever produced any certificate of their qualification. It does not appear that they read much, and it is probable that they have written little; it is certain that they are very ſhy of producing what they know to public view, either in their own pulpits, or any where elſe. Their character is entirely ſupported by artifice and caution; it often deceives thoſe who know not how to diſtinguiſh gilding from gold; it ſhines with particular ſplendour among the vulgar, who commonly aſſociate knowledge with a great wig, a preciſe air, a grave countenance, and the robes of a profeſſion or office.

The poſſeſſion of a good library, or at leaſt of a numerous collection of well gilt folios, gives to many the confidence and the cre-

dit of learning, eſpecially when the poſſeſſor has read enough of the gilt letters on the back to be able to talk of them fluently whenever he is in company with the ignorant and ſuperficial. If you walk into the library, or, as it is now called, the book-room of one of theſe pretenders, you ſee the ranks in the utmoſt order, and not a book miſplaced, except perhaps a Polyglott lying open on the reading table. If you wiſh to ſee the place which the ſtudent really devotes to contemplation, you muſt enter his dreſſing-room. It is there that he practiſes *gnothi ſeauton*, or the rule of ſtudying himſelf, there he inſpects the mirror, and indulges himſelf in the moſt pleaſing reflections.

Preciſeneſs of dreſs and addreſs, and great caution in all that they ſay, is a principal artifice in paſſing for men of erudition. Thus if the ſubject is literary, they are by no means eager to ſpeak their opinion, unleſs indeed the company is known by them to be unqualified to judge; but content themſelves with a reſerve which excites reſpect, and gives an air of dignity. The owl looks grave, and paſſes for the bird of wiſdom. The utmoſt length they will venture to go among men of ſenſe and knowledge, is to make grimaces, to lift up the eye-brows, corrugate the noſe, ſhrug the ſhoulders, turn up their hands and eyes, or walk off with an air of faſtidious

dious contempt. The company give them credit for ſuperior judgment, and doubt not, if they had thought it worth their while to open before ſuch inconſiderable hearers as themſelves, or on topics which to them muſt appear trifling, they would have communicated ſomething which the hearers might have depoſited in the treaſury of their memory for life. When the mountain was in labour, and gave ſuch awful throes, the ſpectators were dumb with the expectation of ſome production which ſhould become the wonder of the world: And if the mouſe had not crept out, they would have ſtill ſuppoſed that the mountain teemed with ſomething of a moſt ſtupendous magnitude. The men I am deſcribing are wiſer than this celebrated mountain, and take eſpecial care, when judicious ſpectators are preſent, not to let out their mouſe.

I have known one paſs for a man of great learning and a critic by dint of a pair of ſpectacles, and a gold headed cane with a ſilk ſtring and taſſels. He ſaid little among judges of the ſubject, according to the general maxim of the pretenders. But his manner was, to elevate his chin, project his lips, fix his eyes on the cieling, place both his hands on the head of his cane, with the ſtring round his wriſt, and pretend abſence of thought. Young company was awe-

ſtruck, and either ſaid nothing on learned ſubjects, or expreſſed themſelves with the utmoſt diffidence, referring all to the deciſion of the gentleman in the ſpectacles.

I was lately diverted with one of the ſwindlers of literary reputation, who is a man of conſiderable connexions in high life, and conſequently pretty well taken care of, as the phraſe is, in the church, where men of rank and power meanly provide for their old tutors, dependants, and relations, without expence to themſelves. The ſubject introduced was the literary character of Dr. Johnſon. As the ſwindler wore a great feather top and full-bottomed peruke, and a ſhort caſſock, every one was ſolicitous to hear his opinions. He fought ſhy, as the cock-fighters ſay, a long time, but he was ſo much preſſed by importunity that he could not perſevere. "To tell you truth," ſaid he, ſtroking his chin, "I have no opinion of "the man. I have endeavoured to read his Ram-"blers, but neither I, nor Dean ———, nor "Archdeacon ———, nor, I believe, Biſhop "———, could get through them."

"But, Sir," ſaid a ſenſible young man who had hitherto ſat ſilent, "you muſt allow him to "be a friend to religion and morality, a warm "friend to the church; and for that reaſon "ſurely,

" ſurely, if no other, worthy the eſteem and
" praiſe of yourſelf and the other dignitaries
" whom you have mentioned."

The Doctor was ſilent near a minute, when, after taking ſnuff, and twiſting his features into a variety of contortions, he ſaid, " Sir, Dr.
" Johnſon was a bookſeller's author. His mo-
" rality I know little of; but his religion was
" ſuperſtition. Sir, he was not a man of learn-
" ing. He knew little of theology as a ſcience.
" But indeed, Sir, I do not undertake to cha-
" racterize Dr. Johnſon, as I profeſs myſelf no
" great reader of eſſayiſts or ſuperficial writers
" of any denomination.—The Fathers—"

The young gentleman was too well bred to dwell on a topic which his opponent ſeemed to decline. And the rector of the pariſh coming in with a brace of pointers, the ſubject gave place to the hiſtory of that day's ſhooting, which was univerſally reliſhed, and the converſation terminated with a game at backgammon. I could evidently obſerve that the company thought the Doctor an oracle of learning and criticiſm, though, with reſpect to his ability to judge of Dr. Johnſon's works, I rather doubt it, as I found he was not poſſeſſed of any part of them, and as I knew he ſeldom read any thing but the Court Calendar

and the Morning Herald. He was a good man as to his morals, but rather weak of underſtanding, and yet vain enough to wiſh to paſs for a great ſcholar. I believe he had perſuaded himſelf, and the little circle of his own family and friends, that he was *deep* indeed.

There are many others who, with good ſenſe and competent learning, are yet inclined to deſtroy that reputation which they have been unable to reach, or unwilling, through lazineſs, to ſeek fame with conſtancy in the laborious mode of obtaining by deſerving it. The artifices uſed by theſe gentlemen are full of malignity. The firſt requiſite is to exalt themſelves to conſequence, that their dictatorial edicts may be iſſued out with authority.

"Pray, Sir, what do you think of the new "poem?" ſays ſome modeſt enquirer. "Mo-"derate, very moderate," replies the critic. "I am ſorry the young man ſhould have put his "name to it."—"Why, Sir, it has a rapid "ſale."—"O, to be ſure, it is calculated for "the meridian of the mob. The vulgar admire "what good judges cannot approve. Popularity, "in my eſtimation, is never a teſt of merit. Such "trifles indeed are not worth my attention; I, "for my part, chuſe to dwell with authors of a

"better

"better age than the preſent. Literature is ſadly "degenerated. Nothing but traſh and rubbiſh "in the market."

He then talks of ſome old author whoſe name he has found in a catalogue, or whoſe title-page he may have read at a bookſeller's. The young man thinks him another Ariſtarchus, though thoſe who know him are convinced that he has as little value as taſte for letters, any otherwiſe than as the reputation of learning may gratify his pride or promote his intereſt. He is none of your amateurs who love literary excellence,

Præmia ſi tollas.

Let him take off his great wig and gown, as combatants ſtrip when they fight, and I believe he would be unable to carry the prize from many an undergraduate, and even ſchoolboy.

Theſe men might be laughed at and let alone, if they did not frequently do miſchief; but they heſitate not to rob the deſerving of the only reward of their labours, an honeſt fame.

——————Detrahere auſi
Hærentem capiti multâ cum laude coronam.
HOR.

As impoſtors and deceivers, they deſerve alſo the puniſhment of deriſion. Counterfeit coin ought to be cried down and ſtopt in its circulation, leſt they who, in the honeſty of their hearts, take it as lawful currency, ſhould ſuffer a loſs which they have not merited.

CHAP. VI.

Of communicating Ideas by Writing or Converſation—Taciturnity.

Ἢ λέγε τι σιγῆς κρεῖσσον, ἢ σιγὴν ἔχε.

Either ſay ſomething better than ſilence, or elſe keep ſilence. EURIPIDES.

THE dangers attending publication are great. An author expoſes himſelf to the ſhafts of all thoſe enemies whom, in the wonderful events of human life, he may have raiſed without deſerving their diſpleaſure. His works may contain opinions adverſe to the intereſt or prejudices of many whom he never knew, but who will gratify their reſentment by the ſevereſt animadverſion. The path of life which leads through the vale of obſcurity is certainly the ſafeſt; but, at the ſame time, it muſt be allowed, that if we contented ourſelves with ſafety, we ſhould atchieve but little worthy of praiſe and uſeful to the community.

It is not eaſy to form a true judgment of our own opinions, and to decide whether or not they are worthy of communication. It is well known that Milton, and ſeveral other very eminent writers, were greatly miſtaken in the eſtimate which

they formed of their works. The public only can decide with certainty. Even a friend may err in his deciſion, though qualified with every kind of learning, and ſufficiently furniſhed with the natural powers of judgment. The works of many which were cenſured or praiſed in manuſcript have been differently received when offered to the public eye. The literary republic is remarkable for its liberty, and every member of it has a right to appeal from private judgment to the people.

He who ſteps forward advances at his own hazard. He incurs the danger of ſevere cenſure and of general contempt. The danger is ſo great, as to require the force of ſeveral motives of no little power to oppoſe it. The love of fame and the deſire of profit are the two great incitements. A deſire to promote the public good is indeed the uſual pretext; but, in the preſent imperfect ſtate of humanity, it is to be feared that it is much leſs frequently the true motive than ambition and intereſt.

The love of fame contributes ſo much to keep alive a ſpirit of activity, to entertain and to benefit the world, that it certainly ought not to be repreſſed with exceſſive ſeverity. When it diſplays itſelf in pride and vanity, it deſerves both ridicule and cenſure; but when it ſeeks it's gratification

tification in liberal employments and uſeful productions, it ought to be encouraged by all who wiſh to promote the public happineſs.

The love of fame ſometimes operates in the production of miſchief. There are many who had rather be diſtinguiſhed by doing injury, than to remain in the inglorious ſhade of obſcurity. Thus, for inſtance, the diſturbers of the public tranquillity by diffuſing falſe alarms, and the violators of that peace and comfort which a belief in religion affords, often mean little more than to diſtinguiſh themſelves and to become famous, though all who are ſo unfortunate as to receive their doctrines, are likely to be injured in conſequence of their credulity. All works produced by a love of fame operating in oppoſition to benevolence and decency ought to be cenſured, or at leaſt ſuffered to ſink into oblivion.

But if the love of fame inſtigates an author to publiſh what he conceives may be generally uſeful, either to arts, to ſcience, or morality, though he ſhould not poſſeſs a genius, and therefore ſhould be able to produce, after his beſt efforts, nothing but a feeble and inſipid performance, he will not be juſtly held up to ridicule. His ſpirit of adventure will deſerve encouragement, and his

his honeſt intention ſhould not only ſhield him from violent attacks, but ſecure to him a ſhare of the public eſteem. Nothing but vice and ridiculous vanity can deſerve that aſperity of cenſure, which ſome very harmleſs authors have been ſo unfortunate as to have received in conſequence of their unſucceſsful lucubrations. Weak and taſteleſs performances can never do much injury, nor continue long to excite attention, if they ſhould have been able to excite it at all by perſonal influence or the grace of novelty.

The love of profit is perhaps a much more univerſal motive for publication than the love of fame. Literature in this caſe becomes a ſpecies of commerce, and thoſe to whom the commodity is offered have a right to examine with the moſt ſcrupulous attention, and to cenſure with ſeverity if they are defrauded by promiſes and pretenſions unperformed. It cannot be denied that many frauds are committed in the humbler walks of literature by the unprincipled and the neceſſitous. It is therefore right that there ſhould be literary journals and critiques to give the public notice of all attempts upon their purſes, and to put them upon their guard againſt *Bibliopolian* deceptions, fabricated without principle, and merely for the ſake of lucre.

But

But as it is not eaſy to diſcover motives with certainty, it becomes every critic to exerciſe his judgment and authority with caution and candour.

My ſubject leads me to conſider the communication of ideas, not only by letters, but by converſation. Much is ſaid by the ancients in praiſe of taciturnity; but it is not greatly admired by the moderns. And, indeed, when we conſider that it is often the effect of dullneſs and pride, it may admit ſome doubt whether it is worthy of praiſe.

There are various motives for taciturnity. Some perſons are afraid of expoſing themſelves to danger, and others to contempt. It is certain that a man who communicates all his thoughts without reſerve is very likely to ſay ſomething which he may wiſh in vain to retract. A word once uttered can never be recalled; "and many "an one," ſays an ancient, "has repented of "having ſpoken, but ſcarcely one of having "kept ſilence."

But this regard for ſafety may certainly be carried too far. The extreme ſelfiſhneſs from which reſerve often proceeds, is by no means amiable.

amiable. Caution is certainly neceſſary in what we utter, but it does not follow that the ſame caution ſhould deter us from uttering at all. Neither our words nor our affairs uſually make that impreſſion on others which our vanity is apt to conceive. If we are of ſuch conſequence as that our companions may find their intereſt in ſtudying every part of our converſation and action, it will then become neceſſary to be oracular, or ſilent. Or, if we are ſo unfortunate as to have choſen our companions among the baſe and treacherous, it will certainly be right to keep our mouths as it were with a bridle. But in this caſe the beſt advice that can be given is, that we abandon the company in which we cannot confide. In general we may conclude that there is not ſo much danger in ſpeaking, if we take care to regulate our words by prudence, as to juſtify a ſingular taciturnity.

Another cauſe of taciturnity is an exceſſive diffidence; and this quality is often found in men of the moſt amiable tempers and diſpoſitions. Their feelings are ſo delicate, and their modeſty ſo invincible, that though they are often the beſt qualified to make a good appearance in converſation, they give up all pretenſions to excellence, and

and content themſelves with becoming hearers only.

This weakneſs, though excuſable in itſelf, is yet injurious to ſociety, as it prevents the communication of many ideas and opinions which are calculated to improve mankind, and to ſweeten the pleaſures of friendly aſſociation.

But pride is a cauſe of taciturnity no leſs often than diffidence. There are many perſons who think the company which they keep for the ſake of ceremony, or in compliance with form, not worthy the honour of hearing the communication of their ſapient cogitations. They obſerve alſo that ſilence gives the appearance of wiſdom; and they are conſcious that they poſſeſs no method of acquiring the character of wiſdom ſo eaſily as by ſilence. This requires no exertion of ingenuity or invention, but is often the natural reſult of ſullen pride and ſubtle artifice.

Pride is ſo often united with ill-nature, that they may, I believe, be called inſeparable companions; and it is undoubtedly true, that taciturnity is frequently cauſed by ill-nature; but let not moroſeneſs and ſullenneſs, expreſſed by a haughty and contemptuous ſilence, paſs for wiſdom, virtue, and erudition.

Stupidity

Stupidity is among the principal cauſes of taciturnity. If a ſubject ariſes which requires knowledge and elegance in its diſcuſſion, many perſons are condemned to an involuntary ſilence. And indeed taciturnity in this caſe is the only quality which can appear to advantage; for to prate on ſubjects which we do not underſtand evinces at once our vanity and our ignorance. A modeſt attempt however to take a part in ſuch converſation cannot but deſerve praiſe and encouragement. Queſtions may be aſked with great advantage to the enquirer, and without the leaſt violation of decorum.

Upon the whole, I think it appears that taciturnity is by no means amiable or juſtifiable, except in caſes of particular importance, in which judgment and common ſenſe muſt ever dictate the proper behaviour.

In early youth indeed ſilence is not only becoming, but the means of deriving improvement. He who is always talking in the company of his elders, fills up that time with his own ſuperficial remarks which might otherwiſe be employed in liſtening to the leſſons of wiſdom. In general, it may be preſcribed as a rule, that we ought not to communicate our ideas till we have reaſon

to

to entertain a modeſt confidence that they are worthy of acceptance. We ſhould imitate the birds, who do not attempt to fly or leave the ſecurity of the neſt till their wings are cloathed with plumage, and their muſcles furniſhed with a due degree of vigour.

CHAP. VII.

Of adapting the Language of Sermons to the Underſtanding and Taſte of the Congregation.

SIR,

I CONSTANTLY attend my pariſh church, and hope not without improvement. The rector, who preaches every Sunday, is a very learned man, humane, charitable, good-natured, and, as far as I am able to judge, a living image of the virtues which he recommends from the pulpit. He is both loved and reſpected by all who make juſt pretenſions to a character of decency and religion.

It happens that the pariſh contains ſeveral families of diſtinction, and gentlemen of the profeſſions, whoſe education and habits of reading have given them a taſte for elegance of ſtyle. They eſteem the miniſter greatly; but they cannot help lamenting that his ſermons, though learned and pious, abound in language which has not the leaſt appearance of elegance or beauty, but indeed is frequently diſgraced by coarſe and obſolete expreſſions.

Now,

Now, Sir, if the congregation conſiſted of ruſtics only or chiefly, there could be no reaſonable objection to a ruſtic ſtyle; but as it is polite and learned, I think the language in which the miniſter addreſſes them ſhould be conformable to their taſte, or, at leaſt, not ſuch as can give them offence.

I do not complain from faſtidiouſneſs, or a deſire to be pleaſed and amuſed by a fine literary compoſition; but becauſe I am convinced that the want of elegance in our preacher prevents much of that good which his ſermons are calculated to produce.

If you will take this ſubject under your conſideration, you will oblige your correſpondent,

AUDITOR.

SIR,

I AM a plain and regular man, of a character which the fine folks might perhaps ſtigmatize with the epithet old-faſhioned; but I regard the approbation of my own conſcience much more than the opinion of the world. I am a conſtant attendant at my pariſh church, though I cannot

ſay

ſay that I entirely approve the preacher. I think the conſtant attendance at one's pariſh-church affords a good example, and therefore I ſacrifice ſomething of my own pleaſure and improvement to the benefit of others, to whom my age may conſtitute me a model.

My complaint, which however I offer with all due humility, is againſt the language of our preacher. He is a very polite man in his manners, and no leſs ſo in his compoſition; but he abounds ſo much in long words of foreign extraction, and in poliſhed periods, that his congregation is often deprived of Chriſtian doctrine for the ſake of diſplaying the graces of an elegant ſtyle. He is almoſt afraid of introducing a paſſage from ſcripture, and totally rejects thoſe old words which convey religious ideas with peculiar preciſion, but often without any elegance.

I am almoſt certain that half the congregation underſtand no more of his ſermons than if they were written in Latin or Greek. The conſequence is, that a great part of the pariſhioners have deſerted the church, and attend an illiterate enthuſiaſt who harangues in a neighbouring barn, and the reſt either fall aſleep or divert themſelves with reviewing the dreſs of the rural belles who

make

make a figure with their beſt ribbons every Sunday. Upon the whole, the church ſervice, as it is now conducted in our village, contributes ſo little to excite devotion or to inſtruct in the duties of Chriſtianity, that I am clearly of opinion, it might be entirely neglected with very little injury to the cauſe of religion.

You will oblige me by taking this letter into your conſideration, and perhaps a hint from you may induce our vicar to ſuit his doctrines and his language to the underſtandings of his hearers.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

CORYDON.

I wiſh it was in my power to exchange the livings of the two clergymen of whom my correſpondents complain; for the ſtyle of Corydon's miniſter would exactly correſpond with the taſte of Auditor's enlightened congregation; and the ruſtics would be delighted with the homeſpun language of Auditor's paſtor.

I have often lamented that, in the preſent confuſed ſtate of human affairs, it is not eaſy to adapt the preacher to a congregation. The patrons of livings beſtow them as benefits to the preacher, without having an opportunity of conſulting the peculiar advantage of the congrega-

tion. Thus it often happens that a learned divine, who is qualified to ſhine in the ſchools of an univerſity, is appointed the religious inſtructor of a congregation of honeſt farmers, who can hardly read and write, while another man of very moderate attainments is fixed in ſome capital town, where the congregation is intelligent, and capable of improving by the ableſt and moſt elegant diſcourſes from the pulpit.

But it is certainly in the power of any clergyman to deſcend, if not to aſcend, to the intellects of his audience. Taſte muſt not interfere ſo far as to exclude plain and ordinary words from a ſermon; for plain and ordinary men, of whom the greater part of rural congregations conſiſt, can attend to no other with advantage. A ſcholar unacquainted with the living world can hardly form a juſt idea how difficult it is to render every word in a ſermon intelligent to the majority of a ruſtic audience. Words which are commonly eſteemed eaſy in the middle ranks, are in the lower quite unintelligible.

Moliere, it is often obſerved, uſed to read his comedies to an old woman, who had no advantages of education, that he might judge by the manner in which ſhe was affected how his wit and humour would be received by the public. I believe

believe a clergyman might read his ſermon to ſome aged matron, or to his pariſh-clerk, and derive equal advantage from obſerving the effect which it ſhould produce.

On the other hand, it is certainly right to uſe every means which taſte and eloquence can deviſe in attracting the attention of a politer congregation. Many have been allured by the elegance of the preacher to liſten with attention; and, though they began to attend like mere heathen critics, have ended in receiving a very ſtrong conviction of the truth of Chriſtianity, and of the propriety of many moral actions which they had once derided.

Let taſte be ſanctified by becoming the handmaid of virtue and religion. She has often been engaged in the ſervice of vice, and ſerved the cauſe of infidelity much more effectually than any reaſon or argument.

Much has been ſaid on the ſubject of pulpit eloquence, and great pains are beſtowed in acquiring the graces of ſtyle and delivery; but, after all, it muſt be acknowledged, that a plain manner without any ſtudied graces is often the beſt calculated to convey ſound inſtruction into the minds of unrefined congregations.

The firſt object in the preacher's mind ſhould be to ſpeak in ſuch a manner as is moſt likely to convince and affect the mind of his hearer. Different claſſes of hearers require different modes of addreſs. However learned a clergyman may be, and however well qualified to expatiate on profound and metaphyſical ſubjects, he will do right to deſcend from the heights of his own learning, and ſtoop to ſuch ſentiments and language as are familiar and intelligible to the perſons over whoſe ſpiritual ſtate he is appointed to watch. The church is not to be conſidered as a ſchool of eloquence, neither ought any one to aſcend the pulpit as he would the ſtage, merely to diſplay his own talents, and to amuſe an audience.

Inſtruction is the firſt object. It is right to adopt the ſtyle and manner which conveys it moſt effectually; but the plaineſt and the leaſt ſtudied are often the beſt for this purpoſe. In a word, the preacher who poſſeſſes ſufficient judgment and abilities will riſe or fall in his eloquence according to the ſtandard of his hearers taſte and knowledge.

A man of learning and abilities is often afraid to deſcend leſt he ſhould expoſe himſelf to one or two hearers who may be ſuperior to the reſt, or who

who may accidentally enter the church. His character requires the ſupport of conſtant endeavours for the acquiſition of excellence; and if, for the ſake of accommodating his diſcourſe to his hearers, he ſhould write or preach in a ſtyle below himſelf, he fears that he may incur neglect or contempt from the judges of literary excellence. But he ſhould diveſt himſelf of all ſuch conſiderations, and, like a faithful ſervant and ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, bear with alacrity every indignity and injury which may ariſe in the conſcientious diſcharge of his duty. Hearers, on the other hand, ſhould not be haſty in their cenſures, but when they examine the merits of the preacher, conſider the ſtate and condition of his audience.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Modes of Inſinuation practiſed by worthleſs Perſons to obtain the Favour of the Great.

Principibus placuiſſe viris non ultima laus eſt. Hor.

MEN of the world have many advantages over the ſcholar and philoſopher, if advancement to civil honours and to lucrative preferment are the grand objects of human ambition, and the moſt valuable purpoſes of life. They are not prevented from the proſecution of their intereſted deſigns by ſtudy and application to ſcience; neither are they embarraſſed with thoſe delicacies which often confine men of genius and learning to the ſhade of ſtudious retirement. While the ſcholar is buſy in the ſearch of wiſdom, in turning over the volumes of antiquity, and tracing the labyrinths of ſcience, the man of the world is knocking at the great man's door, diſtributing his cards of addreſs, or bowing at a levee. He obtains a promiſe in ſome favourable moment, in the *mollia tempora fandi*, and in conſequence of it is advanced to honour and emolument, while the ſtudent is neglected and forgotten in the obſcurity of his library.

But

But when young men obſerve that honours are beſtowed on characters which they remember to have had no pretenſions to ſolid merit, and that the learned and the virtuous are paid only with the ſcanty pittance of reluctant praiſe, they lay aſide their books, and relax the ſtrictneſs of their morals, that they may learn the manners of the world, and acquire thoſe ſuperficial graces which they find to be the moſt ſucceſsful recommendation to patronage.

The following letter of my correſpondent ſuggeſted my remarks on this ſubject:

SIR,

I AM one of thoſe perſons whom the world calls diſappointed men. I own I have been diſappointed: and you will do right to ſuffer this circumſtance to have its due weight in conſidering the juſtice or injuſtice of my complaints and my obſervations.

Having always ſupported a decent character both for morals and literature, at my ſchool and college, I was honoured with the appointment of tutor to a young nobleman ſoon after I had taken holy orders. I ſucceeded very well in my attempts to improve my pupil, and gave univerſal ſatisfaction.

My friends congratulated me, and aſſured me that there was no doubt of my ſucceeding in the church, as my pupil's father was a man of great intereſt. Indeed I thought myſelf certain of a living at leaſt, though I was not ſanguine enough to promiſe myſelf a dignity.

It was not my *forte* to be a boon companion. I could neither ſing, drink, or game. I was not indeed very fond of company, eſpecially that mixed ſort which was often aſſembled at his lordſhip's table. If there was a poſſibility of being excuſed, I was ſure to be abſent, and make an apology. Study was my delight; and I really found that the diſſipation of much company totally diſqualified me for reading and reflection. I am not conſcious of having been querulous or moroſe; but I found that as I was not very eager to be admitted into the numerous parties which often aſſembled at his lordſhip's houſe, ſo neither was I very anxiouſly ſolicited.

It happened that at his lordſhip's country-reſidence, the vicar of the pariſh, a couſin of a neighbouring eſquire, was what was called in that country a very good kind of fellow; that is, he was totally deſtitute of all learning, and of all pretenſions to it. He threw off all formality, ſo as not to be diſtinguiſhed from a jockey in any other

other reſpect than by a light grey coat ſtriped with white. He kept a fine hunter, a pair of pointers, a greyhound and a terrier. He loved company, and could entertain his companions with many ſongs, and hiſtories of hares and foxes. Theſe qualifications and this character rendered him extremely agreeable to my lord; and he was conſtantly invited to dinner after every hunt, and on every extraordinary occaſion.

I ſaw very plainly that I poſſeſſed but a ſmall ſhare in the affections of my patron in compariſon with my rival. However, I will do my lord the juſtice to ſay, that he paid me regularly during my employment, and made me a preſent of ten guineas on my final diſmiſſion.

I retired to a very good curacy in a country town, where I have reſided many years, totally unnoticed by my pupil and his father. I have had a hint indeed that my lady was diſpleaſed with my unpoliſhed manners, and that to this day ſhe attributes the ſtooping of her ſon to my requiring him to read and write too much while I had the honour to be his tutor.

My rival, as I called him, did not undertake to ſupply my place as tutor to the noble pupil,

but he became his conſtant companion, to the great delight of my lord and lady. To evince their gratitude to him for having taught the young gentleman to ſhoot flying, and to cry "*Tally ho*" with a good grace, they have already beſtowed on him a rectory of four hundred a year, promiſed him the next vacant prebend, and given him reaſon to believe, if his lordſhip ſhould come again into place, that he ſhall have one of the beſt Engliſh biſhoprics.

I think I have ſome reaſon to complain; but I will not trouble you any farther. I will only inform you, that I am not in want, and that, with the aſſiſtance of Chriſtian philoſophy, I bear my diſappointment without repining.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

I cannot help thinking it injurious to the cauſe of religion that young men of no qualification, except thoſe which enable them to ſhoot, ſhould be patronized by lay patrons to the excluſion of learned and reſpectable clergymen. The right of preſentation to a living, or of appointment to an eccleſiaſtical dignity, is a ſacred truſt. Thouſands may be moſt eſſentially concerned in a proper choice of an incumbent or a dignitary; but patrons and men in power are too apt to conſider only the pecuniary value of the preferment,

and

and to beſtow it on a friend or dependant, merely as an emolument to the perſon preferred, without conſidering the duties of the office, or the influence of the example. With reſpect to qualifications for preferments, it was ſaid by ſome worldly-minded man, that every one is qualified for what he can get in this world. This maxim ſeems to have been practically received by many patrons and by many preferment-hunters. But every ſerious, ſenſible, conſcientious man will conſider the conſequences of an appointment to thoſe whom it is chiefly to influence. To beſtow the cure of ſouls on a man no better qualified in morals or learning than a common groom or game-keeper, is a deed which a good man would be ſorry to anſwer for either at the tribunal of God or his own conſcience.

There is another, and a very different kind of men, who often obtain preferment and promotion in this age with very little merit. They aſſume all thoſe appearances of merit which can be aſſumed without the reality, and which tend to delude the ſuperficial. They are moſt accurate in their dreſs, and in the punctilios of ceremony and behaviour. They wear large wigs, or their hair moſt ſprucely dreſſed, they ſpeak with oily tongues, they never contradict, they bow low, and they talk learnedly before the ignorant.

They ſpend their time in calling upon every body to whom they can procure the ſlighteſt introduction. They throw away no time on muſty books; but what few hours they ſpend at home they devote to their toilet. At a general election they are very active, and by means of dreſs and addreſs, commonly prevail with the weak to vote for their patron, who they hope will recommend them to the prime miniſter or lord chancellor. They commonly ſucceed, for their varniſh is of ſo excellent and beautiful a kind, that not one in twenty can ſee the poverty of the materials which it covers. When they are elevated to the higheſt ranks, and become patrons inſtead of dependants, they take care to ſhew no regard to real merit, and for this good reaſon;—they are conſcious that they are under no obligations to it for their own advancement. They are influenced and governed by intereſt, and applications from ſtill greater men than themſelves, whom they ſtill look up to with an eye of adoration.

It is very certain that many are poſſeſſed of wealth and power who are not capable of judging of real merit, or who, if they were, have not liberality enough to be influenced by it in the diſtribution of their favours. The evil, therefore, can ſeldom be prevented where the patrons

are

are in a private ſtation. But public authority might interfere to prevent ſuch abuſes in public officers and in ſtateſmen, who are elevated not merely that they may fill their own pockets, and thoſe of every ſervile inſtrument of their power, but that they may encourage merit in the community, by rewarding it with honour and emolument.

CHAP. IX.

Of Enjoyment of Life.

Tu quamcunque Deus tibi fortunaverit horam,
Gratâ ſume manu, nec dulcia differ in annum,
Ut quocunque loco fueris, vixiſſe libenter
Te dicas. HOR.

THERE can be no doubt but that it is the moſt important intereſt of every man to enjoy his exiſtence. The only queſtion is, in what manner he ſhall ſeek and find this valuable end. It has been the enquiry of all philoſophers from the earlieſt ages to the preſent, in what the chief good of man conſiſts. They have never been unanimous, but have differed ſo much, as to induce thoſe who attended to them to entertain a mean opinion of all philoſophy.

"I hate the philoſopher," ſaid an ancient, "who is not wiſe for himſelf;" that is, whoſe philoſophy has no tendency to make himſelf happier. Opinions, however ingenious, which conduce not to ſweeten the pleaſures of ſociety, or to regulate the conduct of individuals, are of little value.

After all the ſubtle diſputes of philoſophers, it is evident that cheerfulneſs, ariſing from real benevolence

nevolence of heart and conſcious rectitude, is the quality which contributes moſt to the enjoyment of life. It diffuſes a perpetual ſunſhine over every thing around us. Whether proſperity or adverſity be our lot, this quality calms the ſtorm, and converts it to an univerſal ſerenity, like that of a mild ſummer evening.

Innocence is the firſt requiſite to cheerfulneſs. Guilt can only affect external gaiety. Health is alſo eſſentially neceſſary to ſecure the poſſeſſion. But as none of us are perfectly innocent, but find, on a review of our lives, much to lament, it will be neceſſary to reſtore by religion what we may have loſt by depravity. Exerciſe and temperance will uſually ſecure the bleſſing of health. When theſe two leading qualities, innocence and health, are ſecured, we may then ſeek for amuſement. Amuſement in this life is one of the beſt means of promoting our happineſs, after the conſcientious performance of our neceſſary duty.

It is certainly very deſirable to preſerve the mind in a ſtate capable of being pleaſed with thoſe ordinary circumſtances which are frequently ſtigmatized and deſpiſed as trifles. A good conſcience is neceſſary to produce this diſpoſition. He who is under the influence of malignant paſſions

paſſions cannot be eaſy; and without eaſe there can be no cheerfulneſs, and no placid and ſubſtantial enjoyment.

Many of the common occurrences of life are trifles when they are weighed in the balance of reaſon. But he who reſolves not to be entertained by them as they ariſe, will reſcind a copious ſource of ſoothing ſatisfaction. The art of trifling agreeably and innocently, after long and laborious exertions, has been called wiſdom. But it muſt be remembered, that trifles muſt not occupy the time and attention which are more juſtly appropriated to the ſerious duties of life.

In fine weather few pleaſures are greater to an uncorrupted mind than walking or riding amidſt the beauties of rural ſcenery. It is wonderful that they who profeſs to be the votaries of pleaſure ſhould confine themſelves to hot rooms and card-tables, when the zephyr invites them to ſurvey the beauties of Flora, and to taſte the delights of nature, on hills, in vales, in woods and groves, by the ſides of rivers, and in the paradiſe of a cultivated garden. The air of an aſſembly-room in the months of July and Auguſt muſt be foul and unwholeſome to ſuch a degree as cannot fail of being injurious to beauty, as well as inconſiſtent

inconſiſtent with enjoyment. The ſmoke of candles, exhalations of perfumes, and other effluvia, added to the heat of the weather, muſt be particularly diſguſtful to thoſe whoſe organs of ſenſation are not rendered dull and obtuſe by habitual relaxation. And yet the life of thoſe who are engaged in ſcenes like theſe is named, by way of eminence, a life of pleaſure; and habit often renders it neceſſary.

The great object of him who wiſhes to render his life truly pleaſurable, according to his own ideas of enjoyment, and not according to thoſe of a capricious faſhion, is to preſerve his heart in a general ſtate of tranquillity. In this happy ſtate he is able to enjoy all that is rationally deſireable, and to judge clearly and properly of every thing which falls under his notice, and demands his attention as a man, a Chriſtian, and a member of civil ſociety. The ſtate itſelf, like that of health, is a ſtate of conſtant pleaſure. But there is one amuſement among the faſhionable which is peculiarly deſtructive of tranquillity. I mean the amuſement of deep play. Nothing agitates the mind ſo violently as gaming. Gameſters indeed affect a coolneſs, and often appear with a compoſed countenance; but this very compoſure is the reſult of ſtudy, it is deceitful, it is a maſque; and the emotions of the heart are often

often the more painful from the reſtraint under which they are kept by that artifice, which renders a placid countenance eſſentially neceſſary to the character of a ſkilful gameſter.

Some degree of variety and novelty appears to be eſſentially requiſite to a continued ſtate of enjoyment. Travelling is found to gratify the paſſion for novelty and viciſſitude more agreeably than any other mode of amuſement. Journeys in our own country, without danger of the ſea, and without the inconvenience of diſtance from domeſtic connexions, afford great delight, and render home more agreeable, by changing the ſcene. It has of late indeed become a frequent practice to make an autumnal excurſion to the north, and to view Nature in her fine uncultivated forms, as ſhe ſits on the rocks and mountains of the leſs frequented parts of this iſland. The folly of viſiting foreign climes, with a total ignorance of our own fine country, ſeems to be now acknowledged. In the order of travelling, it is certainly right to begin with viewing the beauties in our vicinity before we extend our proſpects to remoter regions.

But indeed change of place is but a poor reſort for happineſs. The beſt expedient is to keep the

the mind in a ſtate of ſelf-government, to ſubdue the paſſions, and to reſtrain that extravagant love of variety which leads to diſcontent in our preſent circumſtances and ſituation.

After all the boaſted amuſements and pleaſures of diſſipated life, there is nothing which can ſo ſweetly compoſe the troubled ſpirit of man, nothing which can ſo effectually ſmooth the rugged path of life, and ſtrew it with flowers, as piety and charity. A perfect confidence in God is a firm foundation for the fabric of felicity, which no ſtorms and tempeſts can ſhake much leſs overturn; and no ingredient in the cup of life can ſweeten it like benevolence.

CHAP. X.

Of Writers of Characters.

IF the artiſt whoſe pencil repreſents the features with fidelity is greatly eſteemed, it is ſurely reaſonable to appreciate highly the ſkill of him who can paint the manners to the life. The moral painter muſt be furniſhed with a taſte equal to that of any manual artiſt, and he muſt alſo poſſeſs a peculiar penetration. He muſt know mankind, not only in a theoretical view, but alſo from actual experience, and in the common tranſactions of human intercourſe. He muſt be accuſtomed to watch thoſe minute circumſtances of converſation and behaviour which eſcape the notice of a ſuperficial obſerver. He muſt trace words and actions to their motives. He muſt, in a word, poſſeſs a ſagacity with which few are diſtinguiſhed; and he muſt have had many opportunities for its exertion.

The ancient critics refer every thing to Homer. They affirm that Homer was the firſt who wrote characters, and that the characteriſtical writers derived the idea of their works from him. Caſaubon introduces in his preface a fine quotation

tion from the thirteenth book of the Iliad *; a ſpecimen which ſeems to juſtify the opinion. It is a very lively picture of the coward and of the brave man. But Homer every where diſcriminates his characters, and blends beautiful epithets, which mark his heroes with peculiar diſtinction. It is on all ſides confeſſed, that in this reſpect he is greatly ſuperior to Virgil.

Theophraſtus is the earlieſt author extant who has profeſſedly written characters. Varro wrote a book περι χαρακτηρων, or concerning characters, but his work is not preſerved, and it is imagined that he treated on the characters, or diſcriminating marks of ſtyle and compoſition. Others think it was on the different kinds of eloquence.

Theophraſtus flouriſhed in the time of Alexander the Great, and about three hundred years before the Chriſtian æra. His name was Tyrtamus; but Ariſtotle changed it to Theophraſtus, becauſe his elocution had ſomething in it of divine, and the word expreſſes that idea †. He was celebrated as a natural philoſopher, and his ſchool was

* Lib. xiii. ver. 278.

† Θεοφραστος πρωτερον εκαλειτο Τυρταμος· Δια δε το θειως φρασαι, υπο Αριστοτελους εκληθη Ευφραστος, ειτα Θεοφραστος. SUIDAS.

frequented

frequented by four thouſand ſcholars. He lived to the age of 107, and wrote a multitude of treatiſes. That on plants is the moſt celebrated.

But I muſt not deviate from the preſent object, which is the conſideration of Theophraſtus as the delineator of moral characters.

There are in all twenty-ſix chapters, in each of which a character is delineated. There is no doubt but that much of the work is loſt, ſomething interpolated, and a great deal tranſpoſed. It is but a fragment. Yet it is curious and valuable.

Menander is ſaid to have been the ſcholar of Theophraſtus; and Theophraſtus has been therefore called the Father of Comedy. The characters certainly contain many touches of comic humour.

They begin with a formality which would induce one to expect rather a dry and philoſophical treatiſe on the ſubjects propoſed than a comic picture. The definition of the abſtract and concrete reſembles the dry and methodical ſtyle of Ariſtotle; but the reader is agreeably ſurpriſed to find the careleſs eaſe and lively painting of Horace.

It

It must be owned that Theophrastus appears not to have been possessed of any great delicacy. He pursues his subject so far, as frequently to lead his reader to uncleanly scenes. But the ancients, with all their improvements, were inferior to the moderns in that purity of taste which excludes whatever is offensive to the senses or imagination. What can be more indelicate than the writings of Aristophanes, which the refined Athenians greatly admired?

To judge of Theophrastus, a reader must divest himself of that narrowness of mind which leads to suppose no state of manners right or tolerable but its own. The French have often displayed that fastidious delicacy which has prevented them from perceiving pleasure in the most celebrated works of antiquity. Even Homer is too gross for the literary beaux of Paris.

Theophrastus, there is little doubt, represented the Athenians as he found them; and it is a very curious set of pictures which he has bequeathed to posterity. We find, what indeed might reasonably be expected, that men's manners were, three hundred years before the Christian æra, much like those in our own century. Men were dissemblers, they were misers, they were triflers, they were lovers of novelty to excess; they had a thousand

thouſand other failings, in every reſpect reſembling thoſe of modern times in modern Europe.

He muſt poſſeſs good ſenſe, and ſome knowledge of the world, who can reliſh Theophraſtus. To a mere ſcholar, the work muſt appear defective and diſguſtful. It has nothing in it of ſyſtem. The method in each character is often confuſed, probably from the injuries of time, and poſſibly from the age of the author; for Theophraſtus was no leſs than ninety-nine years when he compoſed it, as he informs us himſelf, though Laërtius and ſome of the critics pretend to know better. One might naturally have expected more regularity in a diſciple of the Stagirite.

Caſaubon publiſhed a moſt excellent edition of Theophraſtus. Caſaubon being an admirable ſcholar, his notes are very inſtructive and entertaining. That he fully entered into the ſpirit of his author, I much doubt. I am certain he often miſunderſtood him; but, at the ſame time, his notes are valuable. Theophraſtus requires not a profuſion of learned notes; but, nevertheleſs, he has had commentators remarkably prolix. Needham's edition is tediouſly dull, and in no great eſtimation. Newton's is, I think, the beſt adapted to young perſons. Newton has made the author eaſy to be underſtood, has explained many paſ-

ſages and many ſingle expreſſions with great ingenuity.

But I muſt not enter into the extenſive ſubject of editions. I mean rather to point out the merits of the authors themſelves, or to mention any little circumſtances reſpecting them which may intereſt the ſtudent of polite letters.

Bruyere ſtands next in general eſtimation to the ancient Theophraſtus. His work has been much admired, and conſequently produced many bad imitators. The characters which he draws are ſuppoſed to be perſonal; yet moſt of them are capable of general application. There is a great deal of good ſenſe in them, and much knowledge of the world may be derived from them. Whatever knowledge of the world can be acquired without mixing too much in its follies, is certainly deſirable; but the wiſdom bought by actual experience uſually coſts too high a price. The tranſlation of Theophraſtus which Bruyere has prefixed is by no means maſterly. Indeed I rather conſider the addition of Theophraſtus as a ſcreen to hide the perſonalities included in the author's own characters. He wiſhed to have his work introduced to the reader's notice as an imitation of Theophraſtus. But it is not ſo: it is a work greatly ſuperior. It has exactneſs and

force. It has wit and ſatire. It has elegance. But, with all its excellencies, there are few books which ſooner tire the reader. The mind loves a connexion of thought, at leaſt for a page or two, when its attention is once ſecured. It delights in roving for a ſhort time; but it ſoon grows weary, and ſeeks ſatisfaction in confining its attention to a more regular ſeries of ideas.

Cheſterfield has ſtrongly recommended Bruyere, and indeed his book conduces greatly to the good purpoſe of habituating young minds to make obſervations on men and manners. The ſubſtance of much of the more valuable part of Cheſterfield's advice will be found in Bruyere.

Bruyere well deſcribes the effects of the external graces in the following paſſage:—"La "politeſſe n'inſpire pas toujours la bonté, l'equité, "la complaiſance, la gratitude; elle en donne du "moins les apparences, et fait paroître l'homme "au dehors comme il devroit être interieure-"ment."

I think I can diſcover a ſimilarity of ſtyle, as well as ſentiment, in the writings of Cheſterfield and Bruyere; and there is every reaſon to believe that Cheſterfield had been an attentive ſtudent of Bruyere.

An

An author of our own country, in a book entitled Maxims and Characters, has imitated Bruyere with good ſucceſs. It is lively and witty. There is at the ſame time an inequality in the work, and ſeveral of the deſcriptions are already antiquated.

Pope is an admirable delineator of characters; nothing was ever more highly finiſhed than his character of Atticus. Addiſon is alſo particularly diſtinguiſhed for his talent of moral painting. Fielding yields to few in the deſcription of manners; and if Smollet had tempered his fertile genius with a regard to decorum, there is no doubt but he would have been one of the firſt in this kind of excellence.

If the knowledge of human nature is valuable, the power of delineating manners with fidelity is juſtly held in high eſteem. Nothing can contribute more to communicate a knowledge of the human heart, and of the ſentiments and conduct probable in any ſituation, than ſuch repreſentations faithfully exhibited. One circumſtance has prevented ſo much good from being derived from the painting of characters as might have been, and has even cauſed it to be productive of evil. This is no other than a proneneſs to ſatire and invective. Moral paintings have too often been little elſe but ſevere caricaturas.

CHAP. XI.

Of trifling Compoſitions.

MAJORAGIUS, abounding in leiſure, and abuſing that happy circumſtance, is ſaid to have written an oration in praiſe of mud or clay; Puteanus, in the ſame ſituation, celebrated an egg; one has written a panegyric on drunkenneſs; and others on a louſe, a flea, the itch, and the ague. They might, it is certain, write what they pleaſed, and it is happy for us that there is no compulſion to read what they have thus wantonly compoſed.

There are already more books than can be uſed by any man, or to any good purpoſe. To encreaſe their number by writing mere nonſenſe and inſipid bagatelle, is certainly improper. And it is to be wiſhed that they who are ſo fond of ſcribbling to ſpoil paper, without the leaſt idea of advantage to ſcience or morals, would be contented with the amuſement they derive from the employ, and forbear publication.

The love of novelty is indeed ſo powerful that it will often recommend to notice books which have nothing elſe to recommend them. But it is to be wiſhed, that as the love of novelty may certainly

tainly as well be gratified by good performances as by bad ones, it would give itſelf the trouble to exerciſe the powers of judgment and ſelection.

The moſt trifling compoſitions of the preſent age are novels, poems, and miſcellanies.

There are, however, many novels of real and ſubſtantial value, ſuch as appear to have owed their origin to true genius and to claſſical taſte. Wherever they exhibit genuine pictures of life and manners; and wherever they furniſh matter for reflection, they certainly conſtitute ſome of the moſt uſeful books for the inſtruction of young perſons. They are ſo pleaſing that the mind is gradually allured by them to virtue and wiſdom, which it would perhaps never have duly conſidered and fully adopted had they been recommended ſolely by dull argumentation.

But it is a great misfortune that among the great variety and multitude of novels with which the world abounds, very few are capable of teaching morality. Their authors are found for the moſt part to lean to the ſide of vice; or if any begin with a ſincere purpoſe of inſtructing the riſing generation in real goodneſs, they are ſo injudicious in the conduct of their work as to enter into ſuch warm deſcriptions and narratives as

conduce rather to inflame than to allay the fury of the paſſions.

There are three kinds of novels; thoſe which are really good, and have nothing in them of a corrupting nature; thoſe which are extremely excellent, conſidered only as compoſitions, but of a bad tendency; and thoſe which are almoſt inſipid, which poſſeſs nothing ſtriking in the ſtory, nor elegant in the language or manners, but are formed merely to amuſe minds of an effeminate and inconſiderate turn.

The firſt ſort ought to be read in youth, as they are peculiarly fitted to improve the mind. They are ſuch as Don Quixote, if any ſuch can be found. The ſecond are certainly to be laid aſide till the ſtudent has paſſed the dangerous age of early youth. The laſt are never to be read at all, but to be claſſed with Majoragius on mud.

Poems, without any pretenſions to poetry beyond a ſmoothneſs of verſification and good rhymes, greatly abound in the preſent age. Every newſpaper has its poet's corner. Now, as Horace has juſtly ſaid, and as thouſands have ſaid ſince Horace, there is no poſſibility of tolerating mediocrity in poetry. Poetry is not one of the neceſſaries

ceſſaries of life. The information it conveys may be conveyed in proſe. It is ſought only as an excellence, a refinement, an elegance. If therefore it is not excellent, refined, and elegant, it may be diſpenſed with. We ſhall be better pleaſed with a plain good dinner than with a deſert of pretended ſweetmeats, in which there is nothing ſweet or delicious. Almoſt all the verſification which obtrudes itſelf on the public eye, in public papers, is uſeleſs and ſuperfluous. It proceeds from thoſe who, with little learning or genius, are ſmitten by the ſweets of poetical fame, are deſirous of making an appeal to the world, and trying whether or not they ſhall be judged worthy of the laurel. Among the trifling and uſeleſs poetry may certainly be claſſed all rebuſes and acroſtics, and moſt of the modern paſtorals.

It will perhaps be ſaid, if theſe ſports of idle ingenuity amuſe the idle innocently, they are uſeful. But I aſk whether, if the idle were to lay aſide ſuch unimproving works, they might not probably find more pleaſure, together with improvement in ſound judgment, taſte, and knowledge.

The works which abound in modern languages under the titles of Miſcellanies, are often of no other value than as they ſerve to promote the paper manufacture, and to employ the ingenious perſons who labour in the typographical art.

They are often poſthumous; ſuch as the author never intended to publiſh, though he preſerved them among his papers from a parental partiality for all his literary progeny. They are often mere juvenilities, exerciſes, or preludes to greater performances, and ought no more to be preſented to the public eye than the rehearſals which actors go through previouſly to their actual appearance on the ſtage.

The miſcellanies of a writer really poſſeſſed of abilities, and publiſhed by himſelf, or with his approbation, and under his immediate inſpection, may certainly be very valuable. But thoſe crowds of books which are obtruded upon us under this form, by thoſe whoſe only intention is to make a ſaleable commodity, might certainly, as far as the intereſts of literature are concerned, be ſpared. Yet they are not to be ſeverely condemned, as they are often highly beneficial to youth and to the community in a commercial view. It is very equitable that a tradeſman ſhould reap his emolument in the fair exerciſe of his trade, whatever may be the intrinſic value of the commodity which he produces. If his book is ill compoſed, nobody is compelled to buy it; and if any are ſo deficient in taſte as to admire what is not excellent, the miſtake is by no means ſuch as ſhould exaſperate the mind of an obſerver. Many

parts

parts of literature are merely amuſing; and, though errors ſhould frequently prevail in forming a judgment of them, yet it is not worth while to be angry. It would be miſerable if readers in general, like Bentley and Warburton, were of a diſpoſition to draw daggers for differences on ſubjects of little importance.

Old perſons, who ceaſe to aſpire at improvement in learning, or perſons retired from mercantile buſineſs, or thoſe who are only capable of ſeeking an innocent paſtime in books, are juſtifiable in taking up whatever is capable of fixing their attention in the ſhort time which they devote to reading; but I think it a misfortune to have contracted a trifling taſte at an early age, and when a young man ought to be preparing his mind to act a manly part in ſome honourable employment. For ſuch a purpoſe he cannot poſſibly acquire too great a ſhare of ideas. He ſhould therefore read original authors, and thoſe which comprize a great deal in a little. He ſhould aim at the attainment of a ſolid judgment and of real knowledge. He ſhould be armed againſt deception of every ſort, and therefore he ſhould be exerciſed in improving his judgment, and chiefly converſant in ſuch authors as require thought, and will abide the teſt of a rational, though candid, ſcrutiny.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Opinion that Mr. Pope was only a Satiriſt, and incapable of Pathos and Sublimity, or at leaſt that his Genius was not of the ſublime or pathetic Kind.

THERE are ſome minds which ſeem to poſſeſs an univerſality of talents, and I believe the mind of Mr. Pope to have been one of theſe. "But "no," ſays a cavilling critic, "I cannot con- "ceive any reaſon for ſuch an opinion; for did "Mr. Pope write any thing in dramatic "poetry?" He certainly did not; but I know not that it is juſt to conclude that he could not, if he had choſen to undertake the taſk. But the truth is, life is too ſhort for the diſplay of abilities in every department. He tranſlated Homer's works; a moſt fatiguing undertaking; he wrote a great many miſcellanies; and of the ſhort period allotted to man, he did not reach the utmoſt boundary. There are paſſages in all his poems, which evince that he did not want poetical genius for any kind of poem to which he had directed its powers.

A very ingenious and elegant critic, for whoſe knowledge and opinions in polite literature great reſpect is certainly due, has exerted himſelf in his

his firſt volume to prove that we hold Mr. Pope in too high eſtimation as a poet, and that he is entitled to little other praiſe than that of a good ſatiriſt and correct verſifier.

In his preface he rather unfairly ſelects a paſſage from a *moral epiſtle*, and turns it into proſe, as a proof that it has no claim to poetry beyond the rhyme. He ſays that you cannot ſelect ten lines out of the Iliad, Paradiſe Loſt, or Georgics of Virgil, and reduce them by *any proceſs of critical chemiſtry* to proſe. But ſurely it is not equitable to compare a moral epiſtle, in the Horatian manner, with epic poems, or with a didactic poem written in Virgil's moſt embelliſhed ſtyle. Yet, allowing this to be right, I cannot allow the aſſertion to be well founded. I am certain that from either of theſe poems, but eſpecially from Milton, many a paſſage of ten lines may be reduced to proſe, by taking the words which conſtitute the muſic of blank verſe out of their inverted order. I know not that the firſt lines, to go no farther, of Paradiſe Loſt have any title to poetry but from the harmony of the verſe.

This ingenious critic ſeems to think Mr. Pope deficient in the firſt requiſites of a poet, pathos and ſublimity.

But the cenſure will include Horace; for the greater part of his writings is evidently proſaic. It would, however, be extremely unfair to collect from this circumſtance that Horace is not a poet, but only a moraliſt or ſatiriſt. He has given evident proof of his ability as a poet in his odes. He has exhibited both pathos and ſublimity. But in his ſatires and epiſtles he has voluntarily fallen from the heights which he had aſcended. And why may not the ſame be ſaid of Mr. Pope? Mr. Pope exhibited many inſtances of the ſublime in his Opuſcula, and many alſo of the pathetic. What ſhall we ſay of many lines in his Sacred Paſtoral, in his Windſor Foreſt, in his Ode on St. Cecilia, and in his Univerſal Prayer? Can any thing be more empaſſioned than the Epiſtle from Eloiſa to Abelard? And there are ſtrokes of the pathetic in the Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady fully ſufficient to prove that he was capable of excelling in the pathetic if he had choſen it. As to Dr. Johnſon's reaſonings on the propriety or impropriety of celebrating a lady in the circumſtances deſcribed, I cannot help thinking they might have been ſpared, for poetry will overlook a multitude of perſonal failings; and though in a moral ſenſe the ſubject ſhould be cenſureable, yet the poem is ſtill excellent. A reader may find paſſages in the Iliad of Pope which

which evince his ability to equal any of our Engliſh poets in pathos and ſublimity.

I am always ſorry to ſee ingenuity and learning employed in detracting from ſuch reputation as is eſtabliſhed by the concurring opinions of the beſt judges during a long time. It uſually argues ſomething of envy in the detractor; and if any are made converts to his opinion, they are generally precipitated beyond the juſt limits of equitable judgment, and appear to derive a pleaſure from cenſuring with unbounded ſeverity thoſe whom the world has agreed to admire.

Envy, however, cannot poſſibly be the motive which induced the eſſayiſt on the genius and writings of Pope to depreciate his merits. Indeed I cannot help thinking that the critic entered upon the work with ideas much more derogatory from him than thoſe with which he concluded. For, in the ſecond volume, he allows him a place in the next rank to Spencer, Shakeſpeare, and Milton. This is a very honourable place. And be it remembered, that where either of theſe poets is read once, Mr. Pope is read twice, which is, after all that critics may advance, the trueſt honour, and the beſt teſt of real merit.

CHAP. XIII.

Of modern Comedy—as deficient in the vis comica—better to be farcical than dully ſentimental.

THAT kind of entertainment which the Engliſh call Farce is the *ancient comedy*, as it appears in Plautus and Ariſtophanes; and ſerious comedy is indeed almoſt a contradiction in terms. Terence's comedies are confeſſedly too ſerious. The language is elegant, the ſentiments beautiful; but the comic force is not ſufficiently apparent and ſtriking.

To recreate, by exciting laughter, and to inſtruct by exhibiting foibles and faults as objects of ridicule, is the final cauſe of comedy. I know that philoſophical critics, or rather logicians and metaphyſicians, give very ſubtile definitions of comedy; but I am inclined to view it rather in a popular light, as it appears to a crowded theatre, or is peruſed by the common reader, than as it is contemplated in the ſchools of ſpider-like metaphyſicians. If I were to appeal to an audience aſſembled at Covent Garden or Drury Lane theatres, I believe they would cordially agree with me, that a truly excellent comedy is that which cauſes them to ſhake their ſides moſt frequently

quently with the drollery of its ſcenes, and the wit and humour of its converſation.

A perplexed and involved plot is diſagreeable to the majority. It employs their attention in a painful complication of events, while it ought to be eaſily and pleaſantly amuſed by the dialogue. The greater part of an audience aſſemble at a theatre after the toils of the day to be innocently amuſed. They are not deſirous of that laborious exerciſe of the memory and underſtanding which is ſometimes neceſſary to comprehend the plot of a modern comedy. I think it would be an improvement in the dramatic line, if the plots of plays were more remarkable for ſimplicity; but many comedies are in the greateſt eſteem which are ſingularly perplexed in their ſtory.

Sentimental comedies have been greatly admired; and it ſeems to argue a great delicacy of taſte and purity of morals when a whole people are delighted with them. But it may be ſaid of them with great truth, that they encroach on the province of tragedy. A ſentimental comedy chiefly endeavours to excite emotions of pity; and cannot this purpoſe be more effectually accompliſhed by tragedy?

Let

Let us ſuppoſe a perſon intending to amuſe his evening by the ſight of a play. At one theatre a comedy is to be exhibited, at another, a tragedy. He debates the point with himſelf to which he ſhall go, and finds that his mind is in a diſpoſition to be diverted with ludicrous repreſentation. He reſolves therefore to ſee the comedy. Unacquainted with the piece, he enters the theatre in expectation of mirth; but the comedians, after a great deal of delicate, refined, and ſerious converſe, begin to weep. The ſpectator can ſcarcely believe that he has not made a miſtake. He finds the diſtreſs of tragedy under the deceitful title of comedy. He is dejected and diſappointed; and indeed has a right to complain of a feaſt ſerved up different from the bill of fare.

I argue from the juſt diſpleaſure of a ſpectator ſo diſappointed, that ſentimental comedy ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by ſome name appropriated to its nature. I have read ſeveral ſentimental comedies which exhibited beautiful language, and were on many accounts very pleaſing in the cloſet, though they did not excite laughter on the ſtage. Terence is certainly the model of ſentimental comedy; but his imitators ought to remember, that the beſt judges, among whom was Julius Cæſar, diſapproved his want of wit and humour.

The

The pleaſure which wit and humour are capable of affording the human mind is exquiſite, and was intended by a benign Providence to mitigate the ills of life. It is therefore deſireable that comedy ſhould preſerve her genuine excellence, and not loſe the power of exciting mirth by being confounded with a ſerious and pathetic ſpecies of compoſition.

There are reſtraints under which the comic muſe ought to be confined. She has uſually tranſgreſſed the bounds of decency and nature. Her ſallies have tranſported her to eccentricities which judgment muſt condemn, though the gaiety of thoughtleſs merriment may ſeem to have approved, by joining in the laughter which they excited in a theatre. Indeed the ancients are more culpable than the moderns in this reſpect; for where is the modern who in obſcene and filthy ideas can be compared with Plautus and Ariſtophanes? The excellent Collier did great ſervice to ſociety by ſatirizing the indecencies of the Engliſh ſtage in the laſt age; and indecency is certainly not the fault of the preſent comedy.

The fault of the preſent comedy is rather an inſipidity. The language is uſually elegant, and the plot well laid, but the comic force is not often ſufficient to command univerſal laughter, inde-

pendently

pendently of the grimace and theatrical tricks of the actor. It is, as I have more than once already hinted, much more like Terence than Plautus. To ſay this, is to pay it a greater compliment than perhaps it deſerves; for Plautus has never been eſtimated at the ſame value with Terence. Plautus has mingled many coarſe jokes and many indecent alluſions with his wit, which cannot but lower his merit, and leſſen the praiſe which would otherwiſe be liberally beſtowed upon him.

If a writer ſhould ariſe with all the drollery and humour of Plautus and Ariſtophanes, yet without their ribaldry, I think he would find univerſal approbation. We have many excellent comedies in the Engliſh language, but they are moſt of them diſgraced by indecency.

The morals of a people muſt of neceſſity be much corrupted by the profligacy of comic writers, for they have the laugh in their favour, which with the herd of mankind is a far more convincing proof of excellence than any argument. The pulpit menaces in vain when the ſtage points its batteries againſt it. Vice has many advocates on her ſide within our own boſoms, and when ſhe finds wit and ridicule called in as her auxiliaries, ſhe no longer hides her head in ſhame, but walks in the broad ſunſhine,

and

and haughtily triumphs over the modeſty of virtue.

Preaching and moralizing with ſeverity would be out of place in a comedy. They would loſe much of their dignity and beauty by appearing in a garb of levity; but a medium might ſurely be found to direct the comic writer, ſo as that his comedies ſhould neither on the one hand become dull moralities, nor, on the other, corrupting farces.

The beſt purpoſe of comedy is to render vice ridiculous; but it has been too often employed in rendering virtue ſo. The French comedy is far purer than the Engliſh. Let it no longer be ſaid with truth; for our groſs taſte is a proof that we are really inferior in true politeneſs, as well as external grace, to our rival neighbours.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Love of Fame.—Moral Eſſayiſts fall ſhort of the Excellence which they recommend, &c.

IF the love of fame is not, as Dr. Young aſſerted, the univerſal paſſion, it certainly operates on a very large majority of the human race. It conceals itſelf under ten thouſand forms, but may yet be diſcovered in moſt of them by a ſagacious obſerver.

Fame indeed conveys an idea rather too extenſive. It implies that renown which ariſes from public celebrity. But the paſſion which is found to be almoſt univerſal is rather a love of diſtinction among thoſe in whoſe view we act, and with whom we are connected. I believe it will be difficult to find a ſingle inſtance of a human creature poſſeſſing the uſe of his faculties, and at the ſame time deſtitute of a deſire for diſtinction.

Authors appear to be peculiarly under the influence of the love of fame. They uſually affirm in the prefaces and introductions to their works that they are actuated by the pure motives of communicating knowledge or reforming manners. But what does their conduct imply? When a man

man publiſhes his opinions, may he not be underſtood to ſay, Come hither ye who want inſtruction. I am able to afford it you. I underſtand the art or ſcience which you cultivate, or the art of life, better than you do, and am deſirous of contributing to your improvement. I am wiſer than you.

Such indeed appears to be the conſtruction which may poſſibly be put upon his conduct in ſtepping forward from the privacy of his ſtudy and holding up his volume to the public eye: and it is no violation of charity to impute the greater part of publications to the influence of vanity.

Vanity, or a deſire of diſtinction, though often a ridiculous infirmity, is often the cauſe of meritorious conduct. At leaſt, it will be allowed, that it produces advantage, though itſelf ſhould have no juſt claim to merit.

Let us imagine all men deſtitute of vanity, or as it may be more candidly denominated, a deſire of being diſtinguiſhed. What a torpid ſtate enſues. The world is on a ſudden ſunk in a deep ſleep; for though there is no doubt that many virtuous perſons would continue to do good from generous principles, yet that univerſal activity which now keeps alive a public ſpirit in all or-

ders would diſappear. The number of thoſe who are ſo far improved as to do good from principle alone, without the leaſt regard to the opinion of their fellow creatures, is ſmall in compariſon with that of thoſe who do good from an united motive, a deſire of performing a duty, and of obtaining the eſteem and regard of thoſe who are influenced by the performance of it, or who obſerve and admire it.

And what ſhall we ſay of the author who gives advice which he does not follow?

A moral eſſayiſt recommends ſome particular virtue. He recommends it ſincerely, though he is not remarkable for it himſelf. Is he a hypocrite? Does he wiſh to perſuade men that he is poſſeſſed of every excellence which he deſcribes and enforces? Poſſibly not. Whence ariſes the incongruity of his life and writings? From the imbecility of human nature, and the corruption of the world. He writes what he thinks and feels in his better moments, when his reaſon is able to operate without the biaſs of paſſion. But in his intercourſe with the world, he is under the influence of thoſe paſſions which ever did and ever will draw all men in ſome degree from the right line of acknowledged duty.

However

However vain an author may be, or however unequal his conduct and practice to his advice and doctrine, yet, if his advice and doctrine are in themſelves valuable, they ought not to loſe their value from the perſonal folly, wickedneſs, or weakneſs of their author. A reader ſhould remember that an author is, like himſelf, a man; improved probably in intellectual abilities and attainments, but ſtill retaining that propenſity to evil, and that weakneſs which belongs to his nature; and which, though it may be leſſened, cannot be entirely removed by any improvement of human reaſon.

Religion only can perfect what reaſon begins. All our laboured books, and all our boaſted wiſdom and philoſophy, are but trifles, nonſenſe, ſhadows, compared to the influence of that grace which the God of all goodneſs vouchſafes to the pious and devout believer.

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